

# HERMENEUTICS BOOK ONE

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## **SECTION 1**

### **Precommitments of the Interpreter of the Bible**



**“A PORTRAIT OF THE MINISTER OF GOD”  
(2 Timothy 2:1-7)**

- |             |  |              |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b><u>BE A TEACHER</u></b>                   | <b>2:1-2</b> |
|             | 1. Know where to stand.                      | 2:1          |
|             | 2. Know what to share.                       | 2:2          |
|             | 3. Know who to send.                         | 2:2          |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b><u>BE A SOLDIER</u></b>                   | <b>2:3-4</b> |
|             | 1. Participate in conflict.                  | 2:3          |
|             | 2. Please Christ.                            | 2:4          |
| <b>III.</b> | <b><u>BE A COMPETITOR</u></b>                | <b>2:5</b>   |
|             | 1. Get into the contest.                     |              |
|             | 2. Go for the crown.                         |              |
|             | 3. Engage with care.                         |              |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b><u>BE A FARMER</u></b>                    | <b>2:6-7</b> |
|             | 1. Accept the requirement of hard work.      | 2:6          |
|             | 2. Anticipate the reward of heavenly wisdom. | 2:7          |

## **PRECOMMITMENTS OF AN INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE**

### **1. COMMITMENT TO A HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE. (MATT. 5:17-18; 2 TIM. 3:16-17; 2 PET. 1:20-21)**

- a. What the Bible says, God says.
- b. What God says, we must say.

### **2. CONVICTION OF THE PROFITABILITY OF ALL SCRIPTURE. (2 TIM. 3:14-17)**

- a. No one area of the Bible is any more inspired than another (i.e., The words of Jesus are no more authoritative than the words of Paul. The epistles are no more inspired than the genealogies of the Old Testament.) - (There is equal inspiration, but degrees of importance.)
- b. All interpretation and teaching, therefore, must be lashed to the Scriptures, not rooted in something else.

### **3. CALLING TO RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH. (2 TIM. 2:15)**

- a. If you cannot say, "this is what God says," you have nothing to say.
- b. The purpose of hermeneutics is to make clear the meaning of a passage.
  - 1. What the author is saying is what we are after.
  - 2. What difference it should make in the hearer's life is what we hope to show.
  - 3. Why God wants the hearer to know this is what will change lives.

### **4. COMMITMENT TO DO SOME CLEAR, HARD THINKING ABOUT WHAT SCRIPTURE MEANS AND, HOW IT APPLIES (James 1:22-25).**

- a. The interpreter must think hard and think well.
- b. He must be thorough and hard working.
- c. The interpreter must understand thinking, how thoughts work, the nature of thought itself, and how those who hear you teach will hear, understand and incorporate truth.

### **5. WILLINGNESS TO BE CONFINED TO THE INTENTION OF THE AUTHOR. (2 TIM. 4:1-5)**

- a. What he is saying is what the interpreter must say.
- b. If it is outside the author's intent, it is outside the intent of the Holy Spirit and therefore outside the realm of divine authority.

- c. Authorial intent constitutes the authority of God.

**EXAMPLE:**

Is it legitimate to teach or preach on the necessity of personal witnessing from John 4 (Jesus and the woman at the well)? What is the valid meaning of John 4? The divine author's meaning is the human author's meaning is the meaning the interpreter should adopt and proclaim.

Never just teach the event. The text always carries more intent than the event. The event itself is mute. The text gives us "interpretive events" not just events.

It is legitimate to say, "This is certainly not John's primary meaning, but it certainly reminds us that..." It is not necessarily true that just because Jesus did something that it is an example for us and that we should do it. When Jesus is stated as an example, we are also told what aspect of His character is to be imitated.

(Note: those who hear you teach will ultimately treat and interpret the Scriptures in the same fashion as you. There is an awesome responsibility here (Jam. 2:1).)

*"Scripture is the foundation of the Church: the Church is the guardian of Scripture, When the Church is in strong health, the light of Scripture shines bright; when the Church is sick, Scripture is corroded by neglect; and thus it happens, that the outward form of Scripture and that of the Church, usually seem to exhibit simultaneously either health or else sickness; and as a rule the way in which Scripture is being treated is in exact correspondence with the condition of the church."*

-Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Quoting John Albert Bengel)

*"The Church and the Scripture stand or fall together. Either the Church will be nourished and strengthened by the bold proclamation of her Biblical texts or her health will be severely impaired." "Should the ministry of the [word] fail, one might just as well conclude that all the supporting ministries of Christian education, counseling, community involvement, yes, even missionary and society outreach, will likewise soon dwindle, if not collapse."*

-Walter Kaiser (pgs 7-8)

## **12 PERSONAL THEOLOGICAL AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE**

1. I must do more than quote a Scripture and then depart from it; indepth study and understanding of the text is absolutely necessary.
2. The best way to teach biblical knowledge is to interpret correctly and apply personally what I have learned.
3. Both *kerygma* (preaching) and *didache* (teaching) are essential in gospel proclamation; Scripture and especially the New Testament does not maintain a clear distinction between the two.
4. Preaching and teaching God's Word is the primary responsibility of the pastor, but it is the responsibility also of every believer.
5. When biblical instruction is neglected, the people's morals become unclear and/or readily decline.
6. Throughout history God has used the dual elements of preaching and teaching to reform the church.
7. The content of Scripture must not be sacrificed for eloquence in delivery, though one can and should complement the other.
8. Since Bible study is waning, the laity must be trained how to study the Bible on their own as they imitate expository methods used by the their preachers and teachers.
9. Faithful teaching equips and inspires people to work and witness.
10. Faithful teaching demands a high view of Scripture (verbal, plenary in its inspiration).
11. Faithful teaching encourages people to bring their Bibles to church; it encourages them to read passages to be taught beforehand and to study them afterwards as well.
12. Through faithful and comprehensive teaching, important problems will be handled in a systematic fashion; sharp and uncomfortable truths are more readily accepted when addressed from the Bible in the natural course of study.

## **THE BIBLE**

This book contains: The mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter.

Here, Heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the Judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward faithful labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

***'Tis the Book that has for the  
ages Lifted man from sin and  
shame; That great message  
on its pages, Will forever be  
the same.'***

Never compare the Bible with other books. Comparisons are dangerous. Books speak from earth; the Bible speaks from Heaven. Never think or say that the Bible contains the Word of God or that it becomes the Word of God. It IS the Word of God. Supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in value, infinite in scope, divine in authorship, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality. Read it through. Write it down. Pray it in. Work it out. Pass it on. It is the Word of God.

***"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim 3:16-17***

***"Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven." Psalm 119:89***

***"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119:11***

## **SECTION 3**

### **CANONICITY**

#### **Definition and Development**



## I. DEFINITION OF CANONICITY

- A. Root meaning – from Greek κανων, meaning rod, ruler, standard for measure.
- B. Theological – rule, standard, norm – normative writings (cf. Gal. 6:16).

## II. DESCRIPTION OF CANONICITY

- A. Sacred books – Deut. 31:24-36 (cf. II Tim 3:15, 16).
- B. Prophetic writings – Zech. 7:12; Luke 24:27 (cf. II Peter 1:20-21).
- C. Apostolic writings – Eph. 2:20 (cf. Acts 2:42); Eph. 3:5.

## III. DETERMINATION OF CANONICITY

- A. Inadequate views:

- 1. Age of the writing determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) Many ancient books are not in the canon (Wars of the Lord – Numbers 21:14); (b) Many new books were placed in the canon immediately (Deut. 31:24; Dan. 9:2).

- 2. Language determines canonicity (e.g., Hebrew).

**Reply:** (a) Not all of the OT is in Hebrew (Dan. 2:4b – 7:28; Ezra 4:8 – 6:18; 7:12 – 26 are in Aramaic); (b) Not all Hebrew books are in the canon (e.g., Jasher [Joshua 10], The Apocrypha).

- 3. Agreement with Torah determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) This is a test for exclusion not inclusion; (b) Not even all the things that Jesus said and did are included in Scripture (cf. John 21:25).

- 4. Religious value determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) Not all inspiring books are inspired; (b) Confuses cause (inspired) and result (inspiring).

- 5. Christian usage determines canonicity.

**Reply:** (a) Also confuses cause (divine inspiration) and result (usage); (b) Then *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Imitation of Christ* should be in the canon too.

NOTE: Common mistake of inadequate views: they confuse determination (by God) and recognition (by men).

- B. Adequate View: Inspiration determines canonicity.
  - 1. God determines canonicity; man discovers it.
  - 2. Books receive canonicity from God and recognition from the people of God.

#### IV. **DISCOVERY OF CANONICITY (5 important questions)**

- A. Was it written by a prophet? An apostle? An association of an apostle? (Heb. 1:1; II Pet. 1:20-21).
- B. Were the writers confirmed by an act of God? (John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3).
- C. Does it tell the truth about God? (Deut. 18:22; Gal. 1:8).
- D. Does it have the power of God? (Heb. 4:12).
- E. Was it accepted by the people of God? (Dan. 9:2; I Thess. 2:13; II Pet. 3:15).

#### V. **DEVELOPMENT OF CANON**

- A. Progressive development of the OT canon.
  - 1. Moses wrote (Deut. 31:24).
  - 2. Joshua added (Josh. 24:26).
  - 3. Samuel added his writings (I Sam. 10:25).
  - 4. Prophets were collected (Dan. 9:2; Zech. 7:12).  
(Note: Later prophets often quote earlier ones).
  - 5. The OT Canon was the Bible affirmed by Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44). The Jewish canon was Jesus' canon. This is a crucial point.
- B. Progressive Development of the NT canon.
  - 1. NT refers to OT law and prophets (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:27).
  - 2. Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (I Tim. 5:18).
  - 3. Paul's letters circulated among the churches (Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27).
  - 4. Peter had at least some of Paul's letters and called them "Scripture" (II Peter 3:16).
- C. Conclusion.
  - 1. Inspired books were circulated and collected into the growing canon as they were written.
  - 2. Later disputes concerning some books should not be confused with the original acceptance.

3. Continual disputes concerning a few books actually strengthens their eventual acceptance (eg. 2 Peter).
- D. The *Antilegomena* books (lit. “to speak against”) – NT books rejected by some and why.
1. Hebrews – anonymity, Jewishness.
  2. James – veracity, Jewishness, apparent conflict with Paul.
  3. II Peter – genuineness.
  4. II John – awareness, circulation.
  5. III John – awareness, circulation.
  6. Jude – awareness, apocryphal citations.
  7. Revelation – authenticity, difficult genre/interpretation.

## VI. THE PERFECTION (COMPLETION) OF NEW TESTAMENT CANON

- A. In “former days” God spoke through the prophets (Heb. 1:1).
- B. But in the “last days” God spoke through His Son (Heb. 1:1).
1. Christ and the Apostles initiated the “last days” (Heb. 1:1; I John 2:18).
  2. Christ is God’s last word in the last days (Heb. 1:2f).
    - a. Christ fulfilled “all things” (Matt. 5:17-18).
    - b. Christ promised “all truth” to His apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).
  3. Christ’s 12 Apostles are the only official channel of His eyewitness teaching (Luke 1:1-2; John 15:27; Acts 1:21, 22; Heb. 2:3-4).
  4. The eyewitness Apostles lived only in the first century (John 15:27; Acts 1:21-22).
  5. The 27 books of the New Testament are the only apostolically confirmed literature extant about Christ.
    - a. Many books were written by eyewitness apostles (Matthew; John; I & II Peter; I, II, III John; Revelation).
    - b. Paul’s letters were confirmed by Apostles teaching (Acts 15; Gal. 2; II Pet. 3:15-16).
    - c. Hebrews was confirmed by the Apostles (Heb. 2:3-4).
    - d. Mark was a disciple and secretary of Peter (I Peter 5:13).
    - e. Luke (Luke, Acts) was an associate of Paul (Acts 16f; Col. 4:16)
    - f. James and Jude were associates of the Apostles [and half brothers of Jesus Christ] (Acts 15; Jude 1; James 1:1).
  6. Therefore, the 27 books of the New Testament are God’s last words in these last days (ie., the canon is closed).

## Which Books Belong In The Bible

by: Norman L. Geisler

The books agreed upon by all Christians	39 Old Testament Books 27 New Testament Books
<p>The books disputed by some Christians</p> <p><i>These books are not accepted by Protestants. Catholics accept 11 of these which are the ones starred (*) or 12 if you count Baruch and the letters to Jeremiah separately.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Book of Wisdom *</li> <li>2. Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) *</li> <li>3. Tobit *</li> <li>4. Judith *</li> <li>5. I Maccabees *</li> <li>6. II Maccabees *</li> <li>7. Esther: additions of 10:4-16 &amp; 16:24*</li> <li>8. Daniel: addition of Prayer of Azariah (Dan. 3:24-90 in Catholic Bibles. This is not to be confused with Dan. 3: 24-30 in Jewish and Protestant Bibles).*</li> <li>9. Daniel: addition of Susanna (Dan. 13 In Catholic Bibles).*</li> <li>10. Daniel: addition of Bel and the Dragon (Dan. 14 in Catholic Bibles).*</li> <li>11. Baruch 1-6 – (Baruch 1 – 5; Letter to Jeremiah in Baruch 6, considered No. 15 by some).*</li> <li>12. Prayer of Mannasseh.</li> <li>13. I Esdras (called III Esdras by Catholics).</li> <li>14. II Esdras (called IV Esdras by Catholics).</li> </ol>

At the time of Christ, the OT canon included the 39 OT books as they are found in today's Protestant Bible though they were in a different order (cf. Luke 24). It was not until 1546, at the Council of Trent, that the Catholic Church decreed that the 11 (12 if the Letter of Jeremiah is counted separately) books, listed above with (\*), should be included in the canon.

# THE BOOKS OF THE APOCRYPHA

I ESDRAS	THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON	THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA
II ESDRAS	ECCLESIASTICUS	BEL AND THE DRAGON
TOBIT	BARUCH	THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH
JUDITH	THE EPISTLE OF JEREMIAH	I AND II MACCABEES
ADDITIONS TO ESTHER	THE SONG OF THE THREE HOLY CHILDREN	III AND IV MACCABEES

The word APOCRYPHA means hidden, or secret.

**ORIGIN.** The term Apocrypha is generally applied to a collection of books, from eleven to sixteen in number, which appeared in the interim between the Old and New Testaments.

They have come down to us in more or less close connection with the canonical books of the Bible.

They have had a strange history. Ecclesiastical opinion in different periods has differed widely as to the value of the literature.

The Jews of the Dispersion in Egypt placed high value upon these books, and included them in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (LXX), but they were rejected from the Hebrew canon by the Jews of Palestine.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in the Council of Trent, 1546 A.D., declared eleven of the books to be canonical, and they appear in the modern Catholic edition of the Scriptures.

## THE VIEW OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

It is commonly agreed that some of these books contain material of

literary merit and historical value. But their canonicity has been rejected, and they have been omitted from the modern editions of the Protestant Bibles, for the following reasons:

1. They are never quoted by Jesus, and it is doubtful if they were ever alluded to by the apostles.
2. Most of the early Fathers regarded them as uninspired.
3. They did not appear in the Ancient Hebrew canon.
4. The inferior quality of most of the writings as compared with the Canonical books stamps them as unworthy of a place in the sacred Scriptures.

## CHARACTER OF THE BOOKS

Authorities differ as to the classification of these books.

The Epistle of Jeremiah is often incorporated in the Book of Baruch, and III and IV Maccabees are often omitted.

**HISTORICAL;** - I and II Maccabees and I Esdras.

**TRADITIONAL;** - Additions to Esther, Susanna, Song of the Three Holy Children, Bel and the Dragon, Judith, and Tobit.

**PROPHETIC;** - Baruch and the Prayer of Manasseh.

**APOCALYPTIC;** - II Esdras and IV Esdras in the Latin Vulgate.

**INSTRUCTIVE;** - Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon (in style like the Proverbs).

## THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

<b>PROTESTANTISM</b>	<b>ROMAN CATHOLICISM</b>	<b>GREEK ORTHODOXY</b>
<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Pentateuch (Genesis-Deut) Prophets Early (Joshua-Kings) Latter Major (Isa, Jer, Ezek) Minor (The Twelve) Writings  <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Gospels Acts Paul (and Hebrews) Catholic Epistles (James-Jude) Revelation	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Pentateuch (Genesis-Deut) Prophets Early (Joshua-Kings) Latter Major (Isa, Jer, Ezek) Minor (The Twelve) Writings <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Gospels Acts Paul (and Hebrews) Catholic Epistles (James-Jude) Revelation	<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b> Pentateuch (Genesis-Deut) Prophets Early (Joshua-Kings) Latter Major (Isa, Jer, Ezek) Minor (The Twelve) Writings  <b>NEW TESTAMENT</b> Gospels Acts Paul (and Hebrews) Catholic Epistles (James-Jude) Revelation
	<b>APOCRYPHA</b> Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) Baruch Letter of Jeremiah Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Jews; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon” 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	<b>APOCRYPHA</b> Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) Baruch Letter of Jeremiah Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Jews; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon” 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees
		1 Esdras Prayer of Manasseh 3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees Psalm 151

*Selected List of Early Christian Noncanonical Gospels,  
Apocalypses, and Other Writings*

*Works formerly appearing in some New Testament lists:*

The Epistle of Barnabas (attributed to Paul's Jewish-Christian mentor)  
 The Didache (supposedly a summary of the twelve Apostles' teachings on the opposing ways leading to life or death)  
 1 Clement (letter by the third bishop of Rome to the Corinthians)  
 Apocalypse of Peter (visions of heaven and hell Ascribed to Peter)  
 The Shepard of Hermas (a mystical apocalyptic work)  
*Gospels allegedly containing some of Jesus' teachings or other historical information about him:*

The Gospel of Thomas (a compilation of 114 sayings of Jesus found in the Nag Hammadi library)

The Gospel of Peter (a primitive account of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection ascribed to Peter)

The Secret Gospel of Mark (two excerpts from an early edition of Mark preserved in a letter from Clement of Alexandria)  
 The Egerton Papyrus 2 (fragment of an unknown Gospel)  
 The Apocryphon of James (a private dialogue between Jesus and two disciples, Peter and James)

*Other Gospels, most surviving only in fragmentary form:*

The Protoevangelium of James  
 The Dialogue of the Savior  
 The Gospel of the Egyptians  
 The Gospel of the Hebrews  
 The Gospel of the Nazareans  
 The Gospel of the Ebionites  
 The Infancy Gospel of Thomas  
 Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840

*Miscellaneous works:*

The Acts of Pilate  
 The Acts of John

The Epistula Apostolorum  
 2 Clement  
 The Epistle to Diognetus

*Other important early Christian writings:*

The Epistles of Ignatius:  
     To the Ephesians  
     To the Magnesians  
     To the Trallians  
     To the Romans  
     To the Philadelphians  
     To the Smyrnaeans  
     To Polycarp  
 The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians  
 The Martyrdom of Polycarp

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CANONICITY</b> <b>Discovery of Old Testament</b> (An expanded analysis)</p>
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**I. PRINCIPLE(S) OF DISCOVERY**

- A. Was it written by a man of God?
- B. Was he confirmed by an act of God?
- C. Did it tell the truth about God?
- D. Did it have the power of God?
- E. Was it received and collected by the people of God?

**II. PROBLEM OF DISCOVERY OF OT**

- A. *Homologoumena* – Books always accepted by all (all OT books except the OT “antilegomena”).
- B. *Antilegomena* – Books later disputed by some (with an evangelical/orthodox response).

- 1. Song of Solomon – thought to be *sensual* (speaks of sex in marriage).
- 2. Ecclesiastes – thought to be *skeptical* (3:20,21 views life without God).
- 3. Esther – thought to be *unspiritual*; absence of God’s name (God is providentially and sovereignly present).
- 4. Ezekiel – thought to be *anti-mosaical* (a millennial period, fulfillment eschatologically of the Mosaic covenant).
- 5. Proverbs – thought to be *illogical* (26:4-5; value judgments and general principles for life’s various situations).

- C. *Pseudepigrapha* – Books rejected by all.

- 1. Legendary
  - a. The Book of Jubilee
  - b. The Letter of Aristeas
  - c. The Book of Adam and Eve
  - d. The Martyrdom of Isaiah
- 2. Apocalyptic
  - a. I Enoch
  - b. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
  - c. The Sibylline Oracles
  - d. The Assumption of Moses
  - e. II Enoch, or the Book of Secrets of Enoch
  - f. II Baruch or The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch
- 3. Didactical
  - a. III Maccabees



- b. IV Maccabees
  - c. Pirke Aboth
  - d. The Story of Ahikar
- 4. Poetical
  - a. The Psalms of Solomon
  - b. Psalm 151
- 5. Historical
  - a. The Fragment of Zadokite Work

D. The Apocrypha (“doubtful,” “hidden”)

\*Reasons for rejecting the Apocrypha as canonical:

- a. Judaism has never accepted it as inspired.
- b. Great Jewish leaders of old rejected it (Philo, Josephus, the Jamnia scholars).
- c. Jesus and apostles did not accept it.
- d. Most early church fathers rejected it.
- e. Great Roman Catholic biblical scholar, Jerome, rejected it.
- f. Augustine accepted it [for wrong reasons] and misinfluenced others.
- g. Roman Catholic acceptance of it in 1546 was:
  - (1) By wrong group (church rather than Jews).
  - (2) At wrong time (1600+ years later).
  - (3) For wrong reasons (Christian usage rather than propheticity).
- h. Apocrypha does not claim inspiration but even disclaims it (I Mac. 9:27).
- i. Apocrypha has no predictive prophecy or additional Messianic truth.
- j. Apocrypha has unbiblical teaching (prayers for the dead, II Mac. 12:45 [46]).

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CANONICITY</b> <b>Discovery of New Testament</b> (An expanded analysis)</p>
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**I. THE PROMISE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

- A. Jesus promised “all truth” to the Apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).
- B. The Apostles claimed this promise (Acts 1:1; 2:42; Eph. 2:20).
- C. The Apostolic Church recognized their authority (Acts 8, 15).

**II. THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

- A. Gospels were written by eyewitnesses or associates (Luke 1:1).
- B. Epistles quote gospels as Scripture (I Tim. 5:18).
- C. Apostle Peter accepted Paul’s epistles as Scripture (II Peter 3:15-16).
- D. First century church read and circulated books (Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27; I Tim. 4:13; Revelation 1:4).
- E. Last book of the New Testament was written before the end of the first century.
- F. Every New Testament book quoted as Scripture in the second century (except 3 John).
- G. Some books were later doubted by some in the second and third centuries: problems were basically 1) historical, 2) heretical, 3) geographical distribution, and 4) competition and confusion of pseudepigraphal writings.
- H. All books were accepted by virtually all by the fourth century (A.D. 397, Carthage).

**III. THE PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON**

- A. *Homologoumena* – Books accepted by all (20).
  - 1. All but seven “disputed” books (the antilegomena).
  - 2. Philemon, I Peter, and I John were more omitted than disputed in rare instances.

B. New Testament *Pseudepigrapha* – Books rejected by all (mostly 2-4<sup>th</sup> century frauds and heresies).

C. New Testament *Apocrypha* – Books accepted by some:

1. *Barnabas, Hermes, Didache, Clement, Polycarp, Gospel of Hebrews etc;*

2. Their nature:

- a. Sub-apostolic, most second century.
- b. Rise of heresy (e.g., Baptismal regeneration, allegorization).
- c. There was only local and temporary acceptance of them.

#### Early Father's Quotations of The New Testament

WRITER	GOSPEL	ACTS	PAULINE EPISTLES	GENERAL EPISTLES	REVELA- TION	TOTAL
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Ireneaus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement of Alex.	1,017	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,922
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
GRAND TOTAL	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

## The New Testament As It Gained Acceptance by the Early Church

A.D. 100	A.D. 200	A.D. 250	A.D. 300	A.D. 400
<p>All portions of our New Testament were written by this time, but not yet collected and clearly defined as 'Scripture'. In some instances, however, a status of Scripture was being applied (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16). Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writings and oral sources.</p> <p>Paul's letters were collected in the latter part of the first century. Matthew, Mark and Luke were brought together by AD 150.</p>	<p><b>New Testament used In the church at Rome (the 'Muratorian Canon')</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon James I &amp; II John Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon</p> <p><b>To be used in private, but not public worship:</b></p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas</p>	<p><b>New Testament used by Origen</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon I Peter I John Revelation of John</p> <p><b>Disputed</b></p> <p>Hebrews James II Peter II &amp; III John Jude The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Teaching of Twelve Apostles (The Didache) Gospel of the Hebrews</p>	<p><b>New Testament used by Eusebius</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James I Peter I John Revelation of John (authorship in doubt for some)</p> <p><b>Disputed but well known</b></p> <p>James II Peter II &amp; III John Jude</p>	<p><b>New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage (397)</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I &amp; II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians I &amp; II Thess. I &amp; II Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James I &amp; II Peter I, II, &amp; III John Jude Revelation</p> <p><b>To be excluded</b></p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter The Didache</p>

FORMING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON						
Other Books Being Written			e.g., Pseudepigraphal, Apocryphal Books			
		140 – “Canon of Marcion” the heretic The <u>Gospel</u> - shortened Luke The <u>Apostle</u> - 10 edited Pauline epistles (less 1 and 2 Timothy & Titus) - all OT references omitted		303 – EDICT OF DIOCLETIAN		
Christ	AD 100	AD 140	AD 170	AD 230	AD 315	AD 367
♥ THE GOSPEL According to Matthew According to Mark Etc. ♥ THE APOSTLE To Romans Etc. ♥ PLUS (Acts: Pivotal Book) ----- = 27 Books		<h2 style="text-align: center;">PERIOD OF ANTILEGOMENA AND PROGRESSIVE DEFINING OF CANON</h2>				
	Church began to see necessity of defining the canon. 1. 4 Gospels not 1 2. 13 Paul’s Epistles not 10 3. Acts 4. Writings of some of the other Apostles	Muratorian Canon – 170 - response “Counter to Marcion” - Omits Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter	ORIGEN - Does not enumerate all 27 as authentic	EUSEBIUS - States some of 27 to be disputed by some Christians	ATHANASIUS - First know list of 27 (AD 367) Jerome & Augustine (both affirm the 27) 393 – Council of Hippo 397 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cn of Carthage 419 – 4 <sup>th</sup> Cn of Carthage	

# CANONIZATION

## I. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES IN THE FORMATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

1. Practice of the early Christians in their worship (patterned after the synagogues). N.T. memoirs of the apostles were read along with the O.T. side by side (in history there was a continuous and growing acceptance and usage by a large number of churches over a long period of time).
2. Quotations from apostolic writings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century added support.
3. Presence of heresy caused them to see the need for a canon.
4. Persecution causes some writings to receive higher standing (which writings are you willing to die for?).
5. Method of book making (Codex allowed binding of several books). This aided in distribution and circulation of the N.T. books.

## II. INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Rule of faith (core of doctrine from which one cannot depart).
2. The real or related (contact with an apostle) apostolic origin of a book.
3. Internal witness of Scripture by the Spirit.

## III. ATTEMPT TO CANONIZE OFFICIALLY

1. Made first apparently by Marcion about A.D. 140 (accepts part of Luke and ten Pauline letters).
2. A.D. 170 Muratorian fragment (Hebrews, James, III John, I & II Peter not included).
3. A.D. 367 Athanasius set forth a list expressing the canon as it now stands. Widely accepted; 393 and 397 reaffirmed under the leadership of Augustine (came into official being because of heresy; authoritative because of its apostolic origin; enduring because of the witness of the Holy Spirit).

## NEW TESTAMENT

### I. WHY THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS COLLECTED

- A. Authoritative words of Christ needed preserving.
- B. Need for a New Covenant Document to complement the Old Covenant.
- C. Apostles were dying and their testimony needed to be preserved.
- D. Troubles in churches required authoritative instruction.
- E. Persecution necessitated a collection of the books for which one would suffer.

### II. HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE COLLECTED

- A. Test of Canonicity
  - 1. Inspiration
  - 2. Apostolicity
  - 3. Doctrinal Purity
  - 4. Genuineness
  - 5. Catholicity
- B. Things That Slowed the Process
  - 1. Position of the Old Testament
  - 2. Slow Communication/Travel
  - 3. Lack of Church Sponsor for some books
  - 4. Weak Internal Evidence
- C. History of Process
  - 1. Apostles to A.D. 140 – Dissemination, collection, and regional recognition
  - 2. A.D. 140-180 – Developments toward a fixed canon
  - 3. A.D. 180-240 – Universal confirmation and consensus
  - 4. A.D. 350ff Official recognition and final agreement

“The Christian movement hasn’t seriously examined the question of canon since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It’s time for academic scholars to raise the issue.”

*Jesus Seminar Leader  
Robert Funk  
Head of the Westar Institute  
Sonoma, CA  
U.S. News & World Report  
November 8, 1993*

But since we have referred to the heretics as dead, and to us as having the divine scriptures unto salvation, and as I fear, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, lest some few of the simple may be led astray by deceit from simplicity and purity by the wiles of men, and finally may begin to read the so-called apocrypha, deceived by the likeness of the names to those of the true books... Since some have turned their hand to draw up for themselves the so-called apocrypha, and to mingle these with the inspired writ, concerning which we are informed fully, as those handed down to the fathers who were from the beginning directly seers and servants of the word, *it seemed good also to me*, urged by true brethren, and having learned from time gone by, *to set forth in order from the first the books that are canonized* and handed down and believed to be divine, so that each, if he has been deceived, may detect those who have misled him, and the one remaining pure may rejoice at being put in mind of it again...[the books are listed]. These are the wells of salvation, so that he who thirsts may be satisfied with the sayings of these. In these alone is the teaching of godliness heralded. Let no one add to these. Let nothing be taken away from these...

Athanasius' 39<sup>th</sup> Festal Letter  
Easter A.D. 367



## **SECTION 4**

The English Bible and Bible Translations

## **The English Bible**

Prior to the Norman conquest of England in 1066, sporadic attempts to translate portions of the Bible from Latin into Anglo-Saxon were carried out. These efforts did not cover large segments of the Bible and were not intended for the common person.

### ***Earliest Bible in England***

Latin Vulgate

Bible of the people- Painting, carvings, stain glass windows, etc.

### ***“Old English”***

CAEDMON – used poetry and songs to communicate biblical stories in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

ALDHELM (d. 709) – translated portions of the Psalms, Lord’s Prayer, and Decalogue.

VENERABLE BEDE (d. 735) – Known as the Father of English history and the greatest name in the history of the early English church. He translated portions of the Bible from the Latin into Old English. No traces of his work are known to exist. It is believed that he may have been translating the Gospel of John at the time of his death.

## **John Wycliffe – The Morning Star of the Reformation (1330-1384)**

The first complete Bible translated into English (Middle English) was the Wycliffe Bible of 1382. John Wycliffe, assisted by *Nicholas of Hereford* and *John Purvey*, utilized the Latin Vulgate as the basis for their work.

Wycliffe intended his work for the common man. The Wycliffe Bible may be seen as a major impetus to later translators who shared his conviction that the Bible should be in the vernacular of the common man. The Wycliffe Bible was condemned as heretical and copies were confiscated and burned. In 1428 his body was exhumed and his bones burned. However, copies of his translation were produced and exerted much influence despite official persecution.

**The sixteenth century:** represents the most active period in the history of English translations until recently. Three significant events precipitated this remarkable era.

- A renaissance of classical learning, particularly in Greek: When Constantinople fell in 1453 Greek scholars migrated to the West and brought ancient manuscripts with them, giving impetus to the study of the Greek NT.
- Gutenberg’ printing press: The moveable type printing press that allowed the printing of both Greek and Hebrew texts.
- The Protestant Reformation (1517): When Tyndale came to Cambridge Luther was preparing to nail his 95 theses to the Wittenberg church door. The Reformation is tied closely to the many attempts to give people the Bible in the vernacular. One of the fundamental principles of the Reformation was that the Bible must be in the common language of the people.

## **William Tyndale - The Father of the English Bible (1484-1536)**

Tyndale went to Oxford at an early age and received the Master of Arts in 1515. After lecturing at Oxford for a year he moved to Cambridge, where he took up the study of Greek and was introduced to protestant sympathies.

Despite strong ecclesiastical opposition, he published the first printed English NT (1525/26). He also translated portions of the OT. The translations were based on Hebrew and Greek. Another edition was printed at Antwerp. In 1535 Tyndale was kidnapped from Antwerp and imprisoned in Brussels by the emperor, Charles V. In August 1536 he was convicted of heresy and condemned to death. He was strangled, tied to a stake, and burned. It is reported that his final words were a prayer: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." What He did not know was that shortly before his death Henry VIII granted permission for an English Bible to circulate among the people – a Bible that was largely the work of Tyndale.

Several factors concerning his work are important:

- Tyndale believed deeply that the Bible must be given to the common man in the common language.
- His work was based on the original languages of the Bible, thus representing a significant difference from Wycliffe's work.
- Tyndale was so capable at the task of translation that subsequent English translators depended heavily on his work for both content and style. Several later "translations" were merely revisions of his work. It is estimated that 9/10 of the KJV of 1611 is Tyndale, and where the Authorized Version departed from Tyndale, later revisers often returned to it.
- Tyndale included marginal notes, many of which contained caustic remarks concerning the religious establishment. These marginal notes often contributed to the resistance of religious and civil authorities toward his work.

Differences between Wycliffe and Tyndale's work:

- Wycliffe's Bible is a translation of Jerome's Latin Vulgate; Tyndale's went back to the Hebrew and Greek.
- Wycliffe's Bible was still hand-copied manuscript Bible; Tyndale's was printed.
- Wycliffe translated into Middle English; Tyndale's belongs to the Modern Period.

### **The Coverdale Bible (1535)**

Miles Coverdale (1488-1569), Augustinian friar, graduate of Cambridge, and an acquaintance of Tyndale, produced the first complete English Bible of the sixteenth century. After coming under the influence of the reformation he left his order. It was while he was on the continent that he worked with Tyndale for a time.

He dedicated the work to Henry VIII. The dedication denounces the pope, who is compared to Caiphas. He completed the translation of the Old Testament by utilizing other versions (Latin and German) because he did not know Hebrew. The New Testament is little more than a revision of Tyndale's work. What was new in Coverdale's Bible was that he was the first to remove the Apocryphal books from their position among the Old Testament books as they are in the LXX and Latin Vulgate, and place them between the Testaments. He included a note advising the reader that they are not found in the Hebrew Bible and are not the same authority as the canonical books.

Although Coverdale was not the scholar Tyndale was, he gave most of his life to giving the English a Bible in their own tongue.

### **The Matthew Bible (1537)**

**John Rogers (1500-1555)**, a close associate of Tyndale, was responsible for this work. The Matthew Bible was the first English Bible to be licensed by King Henry VIII. Roger's work was essentially the completion of Tyndale's work. Tyndale had never completed the OT, and it was left to John Rogers, a disciple of

Tyndale. Rogers took the pen name Thomas Matthew. When England reverted to Roman Catholicism under “Bloody Mary,” Rogers was the first to be burned at the stake in 1555.

The Matthew Bible and the second edition of Coverdale’s Bible were the first English Bibles to be licensed by King Henry VIII.

### **The Great Bible (1539)**

The Great Bible received its name because of its size (161.2 by 11 inches). It was more of a revision of the Matthew Bible than a new translation. English authorities, including Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer encouraged that a copy of this Bible be secured and displayed in every church. So popular did the reading of these Bibles become that the king had to issue a proclamation forbidding the reading of the English Bible aloud during divine services. To this day the Book of Common Prayer has the Psalms from the Great Bible. Upon Cromwell’s execution in 1640, stringent laws were enacted which controlled access to the Bible in English. Under Mary Tudor (“Bloody Mary” many reformers were martyred.

### **The Geneva Bible (1560)**

#### Political Changes

The final years of Henry VIII were turbulent:

- Parliament in 1543 made it a crime for unlicensed people to read or expound the Bible publicly and even forbid the private reading of the Bible by those belonging to the lower classes.
- Henry VII himself went further in 1546, making it illegal to “receive, have, take, or keep, Tyndale’s or Coverdale’s NT.” Bibles were again burned in London. Actually these decrees were absurd, for as long as the Great Bible was the officially accepted Bible; the readers had essentially the literary products of Tyndale and Coverdale.
- With Henry’s death in 1547 and the accession of Edward VI, the trend was reversed, and during his reign all previous translations were frequently reprinted.
- On the accession of Mary in 1553, Edward’s Reformation policies were reversed. John Rogers and Thomas Cranmer were executed and Coverdale sought asylum on the Continent. Mary, however, did not outlaw the Great Bible, and when Elizabeth I reversed Mary’s pro-Roman policies, it was still the standard English version.

#### An English Bible from Geneva

Also known as “*Shakespeare’s Bible*,” this version was produced in Geneva by scholars associated with the Reformation of John Calvin and Theodore Beza. The Geneva Bible was superior to other versions because of the solid linguistic background of its translators. This Bible became exceedingly popular among English speaking people. The Apocrypha appears as an appendix to the OT, with a note saying that they may be read for the advancement and furtherance of knowledge and for instruction in godly manners, but they are not to be expounded as Scripture.

The marginal notes are clearly Calvinistic in doctrine, yet they are not as polemical as Tyndale’s marginal notes against Rome. The Geneva Bible is divided into verses. Words that have no equivalent in the original text are printed in italics – a practice continued by the translators of the 1611 Authorized Version. The Bible was printed in Geneva in Roman rather than Gothic type making it easier to read. It immediately became the most popular Bible in England. It was the Bible of John Knox and Scotland. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of Shakespeare, the Puritans, the Bible of the Pilgrim Fathers. It is also known as the Elizabethan Bible. Next to Tyndale, the Geneva Bible had the greatest influence on the Authorized Version.

### **Bishop’s Bible (1560)**

The popularity of the Geneva Bible (and its Calvinistic notes) caused the English authorities to desire a new translation, which would replace both the Geneva Bible and the Great Bible. The result was the Bishop's Bible, but this version failed to capture the people's imagination.

### **The King James Version (1611)**

In 1603 Elizabeth I died and the crown of England passed to James I, who had already been king of Scotland for thirty-six years as James VI. At the Hampton Court conference action was taken that a new translation of the whole Bible be undertaken based on the Hebrew and Greek. The Bible was to have no marginal notes (with the exception of the explanation of Hebrew or Greek words) and was to be read in all churches of England. The Bishops' Bible was to be used as the basis for the revision/translation, but it was to be examined in the light of the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT. All the available English versions were consulted, as well as other language translations and the Latin versions. The translators/revisers were given free room and board, but did their work gratis.

The AV quickly replaced the bishops Bible as the official version for public services. However, it had a more difficult time displacing the Geneva Bible. Eventually (about half a century) the AV won out over all others because of its superior merit and its freedom from sectarian notations.

#### *Noteworthy Factors:*

1. This was a translation rather than a revision. The translators used the available textual evidence from all sources available to them.
2. The text underlying the New Testament is basically the Syrian (Byzantine).
3. Marginal notes of a sectarian nature were eliminated.
4. Acceptance of the King James Version initially was resisted vigorously.
5. By the mid seventeenth century the innate superiority and beauty of language of the KJV assured it would be the favored translation among English speaking people until the twentieth century.

### ***Douay Version***

The Douay Version was a result of the Catholic counter- reformation. The council of Trent in 1546 decided that the Latin Vulgate was to be regarded as the authoritative text. Originally published in 1609-1610, the present Douay Version is the 1749 revision. The OT was produced in Douay, France, and the NT in Rheims, France (Rheims NT). It is based upon the Latin Vulgate and not the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

#### *Modern Translations:*

**The Revised Version (1881-1885)** - Developments in textual critical theory, new manuscripts, and a sentiment that the King James language needed to be updated led to the production of the Revised Version, essentially a British Protestant effort. This version was based on the textual critical theories of Westcott and Hort.

### **The American Standard Version (1901)**

**Revised Standard Version (RSV; 1946 NT; 1952 whole Bible)** – was intended to update the KJV and the ASV for mainline churches of the National Council of Churches. It was intended to reflect ecumenical scholarship.

#### **Selected translations of the 1960s and 1970s:**

**New American Standard (1960, 1995)** – intended as an update of the ASB. The NASB seeks to be a literal translation that facilitate Bible study and hold to a high view of Scripture. It is one of the most accurate translations of the original languages and good for Bible study. Its strengths means in one sense is its greatest weakness. Its faithfulness to the syntax of the original languages means that it is rather wooden at times in its translation. The original edition was on an eleventh grade reading level, while the newer edition is on a 9.3 reading level. (Formal Equivalence)

**New English Bible (NT: 1961; whole Bible: 1970)** – a translation intended to provide British churches with a new translation in contemporary idiom for worship and Bible study. The British style of English would be a weakness of an American English reader. The translation is quite free especially in the OT in making textual changes. The estimated reading level according to the publisher is tenth grade.

**Today's English Version (NT—Good News for Modern Man: 1966; whole Bible: 1976)** – A modern English translation that is beneficial for those with English as a second language. It is written in the popular English of the 60's. (Dynamic equivalence; 6.2)

#### **The Jerusalem Bible: 1966**

**New International Version (NT: 1973; whole Bible: 1978)** – The NIV is an evangelical/conservative translation. The translation team represented a wide range of evangelical churches. (Dynamic equivalence; 6.1)

**New Revised Standard Version (1989)** – The NRSV is an update of the RSV incorporating the latest scholarship. It is a gender-neutral translation. It does not emend the text as often as the RSV does, while maintaining something of the majestic language for worship. The gender emphasis makes the reading difficult and reflects a theological emphasis unacceptable to many evangelicals. Formal equivalence/literary English; 8.1)

**The Message (NT 1993; OT being gradually released)** – This translation is an attempt to put the Bible into the language of modern conversation. The style of language is rough, earthy, and common of everyday life. It is a good translation to catch the attention of the Biblically illiterate. Its strengths are its greatest weaknesses. Its simplicity tends to water down significant doctrinal emphases. (Paraphrase; 7.0)

**The New Living Translation (1996)** – A scholarly revision of the Living Bible based upon the original languages. It retains the dynamic readability of the living Bible but is based on the work of strong evangelical scholarship. Its limited vocabulary and simple sentence structure makes it enjoyable for reading large sections of scripture, but weak for serious Bible study. (Dynamic Equivalence; 4.0 reading level)

#### **Translation Theories:**

1. Formal equivalence – Remain as close as possible to the Hebrew and Greek syntax, word order, grammar, and vocabulary.
2. Dynamic Equivalence – Attempts to focus on modern, conversational language with sentence or paragraph, not word, as the basic unit.

# It's All Greek to Me: Clearing Up The Confusion About Bible Translations<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In the 60's and early 70's the KJV was virtually the only Bible that anyone owned, however, in the past 30-40 years there has been a proliferation in the translations options available to people.

KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT, LB, NCV, The Message, TNIV, ESV, HCSB

This assortment of translations raises some important questions. Why are there so many different translations? What are the key differences between them? And finally, which translations are best for you?

## **I. Why are there so many translations?**

The Bible was not originally written in English.

- The OT was written in Hebrew and a few passages in the related language Aramaic.
- The NT was written exclusively in Greek, although in a form that differs significantly from the modern language.

For us to read the Bible in English, it has to be translated. Someone has to read it in the original language and spend some time considering how to express it in English. This process is not as simple as it sounds and this is one of the reasons why we have so many different translations.

**First**, scholars differ on how translation should be done. **Second**, the English language changes over time, leading to updates of previous versions or entirely new ones.

### **1. Different versions reflect different theories of translation.**

Many wonder why we cannot have a very literal translation that does not interpret the text. The answer is that if we were to follow the Hebrew or Greek exactly, most passage would be utterly confusing and possibly unintelligible.

- Jn 1.18: (NIV) "No one has seen God, but God the one and only, who is at the father's side, has made him known."
- Literal-interlinear translation: "God no one has seen ever: only begotten God the being into the bosom of the father that one explained."

While one might be able to make sense of this verse, it is difficult to understand and terrible English. All translations must make a number of changes and interpretative decisions to render Scripture in intelligible English

- (1) English word order must be given priority. English is locked into subject-verb-object order, whereas a Greek writer can move these elements around anywhere in the sentence. So "Go no one has seen ever" becomes "No one has ever seen God."
- (2) Many expressions must be interpreted and expressed in a different grammatical form in English. For example, a participle may need to be expressed with a finite verb and made into a relative clause, so that "the being" becomes "who is."
- (3) Words not in the Greek text, but are implied, must be added: "that one explained [him]."

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold, Clinton. *Discipleship Journal* (132:2002)

- (4) Certain words need to be interpreted: “Only begotten” (KJV, NASB) is one possible way to translate *monogenes*; a better interpretation might be unique (ESV, NRSV), or “one and only” (NIV).
- (5) Certain words may need an English translation that is closer to what the term actually meant than to the precise term itself. Although the Greek term *kolpos* indicates a person’s chest or bosom, translating it with one of these terms might confuse the English reader. Thus the NIV and ESV translate it as the “Father’s side,” and the NLT uses “near to the father’s heart.”

A lot of work is involved in getting a Greek sentence into a form of English that makes sense.

A root issue is this: Should the translation place priority on the exact form of the original text or on clarity of the English expression. If the emphasis is placed on following as closely as possible the wording of the original languages, readability suffers. If the translation stresses readability, literalness is sacrificed and much more interpretation takes place. These differences of philosophy have led to a variety of different translations.

## **2. Different versions reflect differences in the English language.**

English has changed a great deal since the KJV was first published. In addition to the passing of the *thees* and *thous*, many other expressions are no longer used or they now have different meanings.

- Mk. 2.3; sick of the palsy
- Ps. 139.13: thou has possessed my reins
- Heb. 8.13; decayeth and waxeth old
- Ro. 13.3: not in chambering and wantonness
- Is. 32.7: the instruments of the churl are evil
- Gen 26.8: Isaac was sporting with his wife
- Job 41.18: by his neesings a light doth shine
- Jas. 2.3: ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing
- Acts 19.9: when divers were hardened and believed not

Our language has changed considerably. Some of the changes are passing fads; others are here to stay. The biggest shift in the past 30 years is the diminishing use of he, him, and man in a generic sense to indicate both male and females. This change has led to one of the largest controversies to face Bible translators in many years.

- Some translation committees believe that new versions need to reflect gender-neutral terminology.
- Others resist this move, believing that this change represents a capitulation to feminist interests and more importantly, unduly alters the meaning of many passages.

## **II. What are the key differences between translations?**

### **1. Translation philosophies**

Translation philosophies cause significant differences among various Bible translations. These philosophies represent two different poles on a spectrum.

- One end of the spectrum gives priority to exactness to the original form,
- while the other end emphasizes clarity and readability in English.

Formal Equivalence – these translations attempt a word-for-word translation. The goal is to be as accurate as possible to the form of the text in the original language.



Dynamic (functional) equivalence: this philosophy is basically a thought for thought translation. Advocates of this view are seeking to be as accurate as possible, but their focus is on meaning, rather than the precise form of the original.

(NOTE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES CHART)

(NOTE THE CHART COMPARING VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS HANDLING OF ROMANS 3.23)

Paraphrase: A paraphrase is a rewording of an existing English translation rather than a fresh translation from the original languages.

**Issues that a translation committee must consider:**

**1. Audience: To whom is the translation addressed?**

There are different ways to look at this question. The first is in terms of age. Is the translation for adults or children? **Overhead**: 1 John 2.2

The age will determine the complexity of sentence structure. **Overhead**: Ephesians 1.3-14

Is the translation for believers or unbelievers? **Overhead**: Romans 11.26; Luke 2.7

**2. Will the translation focus on words or meaning?**

This is the debate between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Another way to state this is will the translators focus on translating words or meaning.

Problems with Formal Equivalence:

- (1) **All translation to some degree involves interpretation.** For example, a rather literal translation of John 2.4 is, "Jesus says to her, 'What to me and to you.'" **Overhead**: John 2.4; Ro. 16.1; John 5.6; 1 Cor. 6.19-10 (see Mounce's discussion of the term *malakos*, which is a term that refers to the passive member in a homosexual relationship.)
- (2) **A second difficulty is that a word-for-word translation can distort the meaning of a verse.** For example the term *polis* in reference to Nazareth can conjure up the wrong idea in someone's mind. Nazareth was more like a village than what we think of as a city.

## Problems with Dynamic Equivalence

- (1) **A failure to deal adequately at times with dependent clauses.** A dependent clause is one that cannot stand on its own; it is not a complete sentence. Usually we put our main thought in an independent clause and secondary thoughts in an independent clause. (See Mounce for two examples)
- (2) A second problem with this method is a tendency to over interpret the text for the reader. **Overhead**; James 3.1;

- (3) A third weakness is that in the attempt to make the Bible understandable it updates the Bible to the point that the ancient nature of the text, which gives it a sense of awe and longevity is sacrificed.
- (4) A fourth weakness with the dynamic equivalence is that it allows English style more sway than does formal equivalence. (*See Mounce example of 1 Tim. 2.1-6 in NIV and TNIV p. 29*).

## Other issues that cause a difference between formal and dynamic equivalence

3. *How will the translators deal with ambiguity in the text?* 2 Cor. 5.14; Ro. 9.5; Acts 1.48;
4. *Will the translation make explicit what is only implicit in the text?*
5. *Will the translation “fill out the story?”*
6. *How will the translation committee deal with possible misunderstandings in the translation?*
7. *How will the translators handle “sensitive” issues or euphemisms?*
8. *How will the committee’s theological assumptions affect the translation*
9. *How will the committee handle the inclusive language debate?*

Examples where a freer translation is helpful: Overhead – Isaiah 5.10; Matt. 18.24-28

### 2. Manuscript Base

Another difference between versions is the manuscript base for the translation. The KJV of 1611 (as well as the NKV) was based on Erasmus’ edition of the Greek text, which was itself based on about six Greek manuscripts. These were part of a grouping of manuscripts known as the Byzantine form of the text.

However, many new manuscripts have been discovered since the publication of the KJV. All other modern versions make use of an extensive manuscript collection of more than 5000 Greek manuscripts and 10,000 Latin manuscripts, as well as numerous manuscripts in ancient versions (such as Coptic, Syriac, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, and others).

Although the majority of differences between these two manuscript bases are exceedingly minor and do not result in variations in the meaning of the text, there are some that are important. One such example is *Jn. 1.18*:

***KJV***: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

***NASB***: No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

While it would be going to far afield right now to go into the details of textual criticism now and the complex reasons why the revisers of the KJV and the creators of the NKJV did not expand there textual basis; it is important to note here that these Bibles are based on a different collection of manuscripts from other English versions.

### ***III. Which are the best translations for you?***

- 1. Personal Bible Reading**
- 2. Careful Bible Study**
- 3. Public Scripture Reading**
- 4. All-around Bibles**

# WHAT ARE TRANSLATIONS

Introduction – Communication is not as easy as it appears.

- What about communicating in the same language in the same country?
- What about communicating in the same language but in a different country?
- What about speaking in a different language but living in the same century?
- What happens when you get all the way down the progression and you have different languages from different countries separated by centuries, which is the position we are in with the Bible.

For example, Acts 20.37 says in a word for word translation: “They fell on his neck.” What does that mean? They were embracing and kissing him, but how do you get that from that translation?

*THE POINT IS THAT COMMUNICATION IS NOT SIMPLE. IF THERE IS MISCOMMUNICATION BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE, LIVING IN THE SAME CULTURE, LOOKING DIRECTLY AT EACH OTHER AND BEING ABLE TO SEE BODY LANGUAGE AND ALL THE OTHER CLUES WE USE IN COMMUNICATION, THEN HOW MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IT IS TO UNDERSTAND COMMUNICATION COMING FROM TWO THOUSAND YEARS AG, THROUGH DIFFERENT A LANGUAGE, STEMMING FROM AS DIFFERENT CULTURE.*

The reason this is so important is that it is the meaning conveyed by the words of scripture that is so crucial to us, but to get to that meaning we have to go through words and grammar. And because many of you do not know Greek and Hebrew you must rely on the translators’ understanding of the words and grammar as they attempt to convey the passage’s meaning. But why are the translations so different if they are working with the same words and grammar?

Key questions that each translation committee must answer:

1. Audience: To whom am I writing? Who is my audience?

- To whom am I writing? Age, Are they believers? Is the translation for public or private reading?

2. Words or Meaning – Am I going to translate words or meaning?

- Caveat – the meaning of the word literal
- Two approaches – “Formal equivalence” and “Dynamic equivalence”
- Problems with formal equivalence: (1) It is interpretive. (2) Word for word translations can lose or distort meaning.
- Problems with dynamic equivalence: (1) They generally do not view the structure of the language as having much connection with meaning, therefore they often exercise great freedom in translating. (2)

3. Ambiguity – What am I going to do with ambiguity?

4. Move implicit to explicit – Will the translation make explicit what is only implicit in the Greek or Hebrew text?
5. Fill out the story – Will a translation “fill out the story?”
6. Possible Misunderstanding – How will the translation committee deal with possible misunderstandings in their translation?
7. Sensitivity and Euphemism – How do the translators handle “sensitive” issues?
8. Theological biases – How do a committee’s theological assumptions affect the translation?
9. Inclusive language – What will the translators handle inclusive language?

### **An Examination of Bible Translations**

**King James Version** – its strength is that it continues to be the best example of the power of classic English language; easy to memorize; poetic feel. Its obvious weakness is its obsolete vocabulary and complex sentence structure, which make it difficult for modern readers, especially those without a church background. Its translation theory is formal equivalence (remain as close to the Hebrew and Greek syntax, word order, grammar, and vocabulary as possible). Publisher reading level is 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

*Ryken: Three reasons for its decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: (1) its language is now outdated; (2) the translators knowledge of ancient languages was less reliable than modern knowledge is; (3) and the translation uses a text that most scholars no longer consider the most reliable (Textus receptus).*

### **Modern Translations:**

**The Revised Version (1881-1885)** - Developments in textual critical theory, new manuscripts, and a sentiment that the King James language needed to be updated led to the production of the Revised Version, essentially a British Protestant effort. This version was based on the textual critical theories of Westcott and Hort. The translators were allowed to introduce only those readings that would render the Authorized Version closer to the original languages and would not modernize the English unduly. The American translation teams were not satisfied with the strict guidelines but were prohibited from making more drastic changes.

Important contributions: (1) arrangement of the content of the paragraphs, (2) improved consistency in lacing words not in the original in italics, (3) printing OT poetry in indented poetic lines (instead of as prose), (3) inclusion of marginal notes that alert the reader to variations in wording of ancient manuscripts.

**The American Standard Version (1901)** – Americans were given a role in the (English) Revised Version; however, many of their suggestions were not accepted. The American committee remained intact after the publication of the Revised Version, and when the English copyright ran out they produced a version of their own. It was a more thorough revision of the Authorized Version than its British counterpart.

**Revised Standard Version (RSV; 1946 NT; 1952 whole Bible)** – was intended to update the KJV and the ASV for mainline churches of the National Council of Churches. It was intended to reflect ecumenical scholarship. Its theological basis can be seen in its translation of Isaiah 7.14 and its readiness to emend the standard Hebrew text without basis. (Formal equivalence – 10.4)

The translation was criticized for perceived doctrinal liberalness. Most of the criticism was aimed at the translation rather than the translators. One minister burned the version with a blowtorch in the pulpit, remarking that like the devil it was hard to burn. He then sent the ashes to the chairman of the RSV committee. That, of course, is better than burning the translators, which they did in the days of Tyndale. Pamphlets appeared entitled, “The Bible of the Antichrist.” However, one woman began reading it and enjoyed it so much that she admitted she loved it “almost as much as the Bible.” Robert Mounce, a significant evangelical scholar in a review for *Eternity* (1974) referred to the RSV as the best translation in the English language for general use.

**New American Standard (1960, 1995)** – intended as an update of the ASB. The NASB is the work of 58 evangelical scholars and seeks to be a literal translation that facilitate Bible study and uphold to a high view of Scripture. It is one of the most accurate translations of the original languages and good for Bible study. Its strengths in one sense is its greatest weakness. Its faithfulness to the syntax of the original languages means that it is rather wooden at times in its translation making it awkward to read. The original edition was on an eleventh grade reading level, while the newer edition is on a 9.3 reading level. (Formal Equivalence)

Ryken: The NASB was the translation of choice for evangelicals until the NIV. One significant weakness was that it printed each verse as an individual unit resulting in a fragmented text, more recent editions are available in paragraph style.

**New English Bible (NT: 1961; whole Bible: 1970)** – a translation intended to provide British churches with a new translation in contemporary idiom for worship and Bible study. The British style of English would be a weakness for an American English reader. The translation is quite free especially in the OT in making textual changes. The estimated reading level according to the publisher is tenth grade.

**Today's English Version (NT—Good News for Modern Man: 1966; whole Bible: 1976)** – A modern English translation that is beneficial for those with English as a second language. It is written in the popular English of the 60's. During its first six years of existence approximately thirty-five million copies were sold worldwide and by the publication of the OT fifty million copies had been sold. (Dynamic equivalence; 6.2)

Ryken: The TEV is important because it is the first thoroughgoing outgrowth of Eugene Nida's dynamic theory of translation. In 1995 it adopted gender inclusive language and avoidance of theological terms like atonement, redemption, and righteousness.

Elimination of some technical terms:

Antichrist	enemy of Christ (1 John 2.18,22)
Elders/bishops	church leaders (Phil. 1.14; 1 Tim. 3.2)
Caesar	Emperor or Roman Emperor (Lk. 2.1; 3.1)
Deacons	Church helper (Phil. 1.1; 1 Tim. 3.8)
Centurion	Army Officer (Matt. 27.54)
Repent	Turn away from your sins (Matt. 3.2)
Justify	"put right with God" (Rom. 2.13; 5.11)

Figures of speech and Semitisms are difficult to translate into modern speech but according to DE theory they do not need to be since they are a part of the Greek and Hebrew language.

The finger of God	God's power (Lk. 11.20)
Cut to the heart	deeply troubled (Acts 2.37)
Father of glory	glorious Father (Eph. 1.17)
The Preacher	the philosopher (Ecc. 1.1)

Other adaptations due to translational philosophy: Because more weight is put on meaning than form, questions are often simplified into statements: "Don not even the tax collectors do the same?" (Matt. 5.46) becomes "Even the tax collectors do that." Another example, ""For what can a man give in return for his life?" (Mk. 8.37 "becomes "There is nothing he can give to regain his life."

**The Jerusalem Bible: 1966** – The JB was the first complete Catholic Bible translated into English from the original languages. Prior to the JB all Catholic translations were based on the Latin Vulgate. J. R. Tolkien, of Lord of the Rings fame, was one of the notable translators. The translation is over two thousand pages long due to the significant numbers of footnotes (some of which would be offensive to Protestants). The Apocrypha is found in the same place they stand in the Septuagint and Vulgate. The translation is of such a high quality that many Protestants profitably use it.

**Living Bible (1971)** – A paraphrase (based on the ASV) intended originally by the author as an aid in helping his children understand the Bible. His translation was so popular that he established his own publishing company, which he called Tyndale House after William Tyndale. The LB was the best selling book in the U.S. in 1972.

**New International Version (NT: 1973; whole Bible: 1978)** – The NIV is an evangelical/conservative translation. The translation team represented a wide range of evangelical churches. Several significant commentary series are based on this translation. (Dynamic equivalence; 6.1)

**New Revised Standard Version (1989)** – The NRSV is an update of the RSV incorporating the latest scholarship. It is a gender-neutral translation. It does not emend the text as often as the RSV does, while maintaining something of the majestic language for worship. The gender emphasis makes the reading difficult and reflects a theological emphasis unacceptable to many evangelicals. (Formal equivalence/literary English; 8.1)

**The Message (NT 1993; OT being gradually released)** – This translation/paraphrase is an attempt to put the Bible into the language of modern conversation. Eugene Peterson, professor emeritus of spiritual theology at Regent College, Vancouver, is doing the translation work. The style of language is rough, earthy, and common of everyday life. It is a good translation to catch the attention of the Biblically illiterate. Its strengths are its greatest weaknesses. Its simplicity tends to water down significant doctrinal emphases. (Paraphrase; 7.0) The Christian Book sellers association reported that it ranked sixth among the best selling Bibles in 1999.

Matt. 6.9-13: “Our Father in heaven/Reveal who you are/Set the world right/Do what’s best – as above, so below/Keep us alive with three square meals/Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others/Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil/You’re in charge/You can do anything you want/You’re ablaze in beauty/Yes. Yes. Yes.

**The New Living Translation (1996)** – A scholarly revision of the Living Bible based upon the original languages. It retains the dynamic readability of the Living Bible but is based on the work of strong evangelical scholarship. Its limited vocabulary and simple sentence structure makes it enjoyable for reading large sections of scripture, but weak for serious Bible study. (Dynamic Equivalence; 4.0 reading level)

Two major differences with the LB are: (1) it is not a paraphrase but follows a Dynamic Equivalent approach to Translation. (2) The NLT is translated from the original languages and thus vastly improves its accuracy over the LB.

## **An Example of the Difficulties in Translation**

### **1 Cor. 7.36**

*KJV* – “if a man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin. . .”

*NASB* – “If a man think he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter. . .”

*NIV* – “If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engage to . . .”

*NEB* – “If a man has a partner in celibacy and feels that he is not behaving properly toward her . . .”

#### **Translation principles:**

This has to do with how far one is willing to go in order to bridge the gap between two languages – one ancient and the other modern. For example, should lamp be translated flashlight or torch in cultures where these serve the same purpose a lamp once did? Or should one translate it lamp and let the reader bridge the gap himself? Should “holy kiss” be translated “the handshake of Christian love” in a culture where public kissing is offensive?

**1. The problem – Language is a part of culture and no two cultures are the same.**



- Ask for an example of trying to translate an idea from one language to another language.

## 2. Qualities of a Good Translation

### *2.1 – Should be based on the best Hebrew and Greek manuscripts*

A translation is no better than its Greek and Hebrew manuscripts.

In 1516, Erasmus Greek NT was based on 4 Greek manuscripts. 2 dated from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and 2 were later than that. He had no Greek manuscript of the last six verse of Revelation, so he took the Latin Vulgate and translated back into Greek. His edition became known as the Textus Receptus. Since that time over 5000 Greek manuscripts or portions of manuscripts have been discovered.

**1 John 5.7** – KJV/NIV – Every modern translation omits it. Only four Greek manuscripts in the world have this material. One from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, however, it is not in the text but in the margin. One manuscript from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but it is not in the text but in the margin. One manuscript from the 14/15<sup>th</sup> century has it, but only in the margin. Erasmus said he would include it if he had one manuscript that has it in the body of the text. One was produced but is to be dated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The doctrine of the trinity does not stand or fall on this text. If it is removed the doctrine of the trinity is not weakened at all. The early church hammered out the doctrine of the trinity between the second - fourth centuries.

**Mk. 1.2:**

KJV – “As it is written in the prophets . . .”

NIV – “It is written

**1 Sam. 8.16** – (Fee p. 32)

KJV – “your goodliest young men and your donkeys.

NIV – “the best of your cattle and donkeys”

The text of the NIV (“your cattle”) comes from the LXX, the usually reliable Greek translation of the OT made in Egypt around 250-150 B.C. The KJV follows the medieval Hebrew text, reading “young men,” a rather unlikely term to be used to parallel “donkeys.” The origin of the miscopy in the Hebrew text, which the KJV followed, is easy to understand. The word for “your young men” in Hebrew is bhrykm, while “your cattle was bqrykm. The incorrect copying of a single letter by a scribe resulted in the change of meaning.

### *2.2 – Should be based on the latest knowledge of language and culture*

- Mt. 1.18-20 – the concept of “bethroal”

### *2.3 – Should be accurate (accurate may not mean readable)*

When the KJV was translated they knew nothing of Hebrew poetry.

### *2.4 – Should be understandable (understandable may not mean accurate)*

The Living Bible is an example of a translation that is almost always understandable but at times is not accurate.

### *2.5 – Should be contemporary (rapid changes in English language require constant revision)*

- See examples in Wegner

### *2.6 – Should be dignified (not using crude language simply for shock effect)*

- 1 Sam 21 in an early edition of the Living Bible has Saul called an SOB. Clarence Jordan in the Cotton patch version translates Ro. 6.1,15 as “Hell no!”

### *2.8 – Should avoid theological bias*

- Jerusalem Bible in Mt. 1.25 stretches the idea beyond reasonable grounds.

## Three Major Approaches to Bible Translation

***Literal Translation*** – An attempt to reflect the sentence structure, verbal nuances, and idioms of the original language in order to assure accuracy in emphasis and style. This is the primary logic behind placing words in italics that are not a part of the original text but are needed to make sense in English. The attempt to translate by keeping as close as possible to the exact words and phrasing in the original language, yet still make sense in the receptor language. A literal translation will keep the historical distance intact at all points.

***Dynamic Equivalence*** – Another approach does not believe that it is crucial to carry over the style, structure, and idioms of the original biblical languages. Thus, there is an attempt to choose English idioms that most closely mirror the original intent of the Hebrew or Greek idioms. Such a translation keeps historical distance on all historical and most factual matters, but updates matters of language, grammar, and style.

***Paraphrase*** – The attempt to translate the ideas from one language to another, with less concern about using the exact words of the original. A paraphrase seeks to eliminate as much of the historical distance as possible.

<u>literal</u>		<u>dynamic equivalent</u>	<u>paraphrase</u>	
KJV	RSV	NIV	NLB	LB
NAS				

Translators can go to far in either direction: Clarence Jordan translates Paul’s letter to Rome as to Washington. On the other extreme the literal translation by Robert Young of 1 Cor. 5.1: “Whoredom is actually heard among you, and such whoredom as is not even named among the nations – as that one hath the wife of the father”

This is a major problem with a paraphrase. Examples from the Living Bible:

Some may find this acceptable but it obscures what the Bible said and the ancientness of the text.

- Flashlights (Ps. 119.105)
- Handshake (1 Peter 5.15)
- Pancakes (Gen. 18.6)

These seem to go to far:

- Translating charismata (“spiritual gifts”) as special abilities in 1 Cor. 12-14)
- 1 Peter 5.13 – he places Rome instead of cryptic reference to Babylon.

## **Choosing A Translation**

1. Choose a translation that uses modern English.

The whole purpose of making a translation is to move the message of the original language into a language you can understand.

2. Choose a translation that is based on the best Hebrew and Greek text.

The standard text for the OT is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)* and the latest standard text for the NT is reflected in the UBS Greek New testament or Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

3. Give preference to a translation that is done by a committee rather than an individual.
4. Select a translation that is suited for your purpose at that time.

There are times when our choice will be determined by our purpose in reading. When reading devotionally we may choose a translation like The Message, or if we are reading rather large portions of the OT we may prefer the New Living Translation, or when preparing a sermon the NASB or the NIV.

## **Reading the Scripture**

1. Regularity of Habit
2. Flexibility of schedule
3. Variety in method
4. Meditatively in Spirit

Howard Hendricks (Living By the Book) Aspects of Good Bible reading.

1. Read Thoughtfully – put on your thinking cap when you read the Scriptures (Proverbs 2.4)
2. Read Repeatedly
3. Read patiently – work with one book for a period of time
4. Read Selectively – Ask specific questions from a text
5. Read Prayerfully – pray what you discover back to God
6. Read Imaginatively – read different translations and paraphrases; seek to read it as you would a novel
7. Read Meditatively – contemplate and think about something you find interesting (Joshua 1; Psalm 1)
8. Read Purposefully – search for the author's meaning as you read.

## **SECTION 5**

### **An Overview of the Hermeneutical Process**

# **SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERPRETING THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE**

(A Summation)

## **I. STUDY THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.**

1. Consider the questions of date, authorship, recipients, and purpose (general matters of introduction.)
2. Develop an outline of the entire book (study Bibles and commentaries will be helpful).
1. Examine the relationship of the passage under consideration in both its near and far context.

## **II. ESTABLISH THE BEST TEXTUAL BASE POSSIBLE:**

1. Use the original language if you can.
2. Compare various versions and translations.

## **III. INVESTIGATE THE TEXT LINGUISTICALLY (E.G. WORD BY WORD).**

1. Make a lexical (definitional) study of crucial words.
2. Research the passage for key words, phrases, and ideas.
3. Track the verbs!
4. Cross Reference.

## **IV. EXAMINE THE FORM OR FORMS OF THE MATERIAL IN THE PASSAGE.**

1. What is the literary type (history, poetry, prophetic, apocalyptic)?
2. What literary devices are used?
3. Is there any indication of the life situation from which the material came?

## **V. ANALYZE THE STRUCTURE OF THE PASSAGE.**

1. Determine if the material constitutes a literary unity.
2. Is there a logical sequence of ideas present?
3. Isolate the basic themes or emphases.
4. Outline the passage you are studying. Use the outline as the framework for your teaching.

# **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETATION**

1. The context rules when interpreting the text.
2. The text must be interpreted in light of all Scripture.
3. Scripture will never contradict itself.
4. Scripture should be interpreted literally (or naturally according to its genre).
5. Do not develop doctrine from obscure or difficult passages.
6. Discover the author's original intended meaning and honor that meaning.
7. Check your conclusions using reliable resources.

## “The Task of the Interpreter”

The interpreter must bridge the gap or horizon between the cultural elements that are present in the text of Scripture and those in our own times. One proposal to bridge this gap is called by some “ethnohermeneutics,” which recognizes three horizons in cross-cultural interpretation: 1) the culture of the Bible, 2) the culture of the interpreter, and 3) the culture of the receptor. Care must be exercised not to let the second and third horizons dictate the message of the first horizon.

The early church fathers used the terms “condescension,” “accommodation,” and “acculturation” to deal with cultural matters in the text. In their view, the cultural view, the cultural aspects of the Scriptures, were meant to make the truth more accessible and to assist us in applying the text to our own day.

When interpreting cultural aspects of Scripture, three options are available. We may (1) retain the theology taught along with the cultural-historical expression of that principle, or (2) retain the theology of a passage, but replace the expression of the behavior, or (3) replace both the principle and the practice. Five guidelines for doing this are: (1) observe the reason given in the text for a cultural element, (e.g. why is there a head-covering required in 1 Cor. 11:2-16?) (2) modify the cultural form but retain the content, (3) avoid all practices integral to pagan culture, (4) retain practices grounded in the nature of God, and (5) adjust when the circumstances alter the application of a law or principle. But above all, be hesitant and humble in all cases where we are uncertain.

# HOW TO STUDY AND TEACH THE BIBLE

What does God want  
my people to know?



**The Purpose**  
(Moving from  
the “Then” to the “Now”)



What does God want  
my people to do?

## “Bridge”

**The Study**  
(Working in the past)

**The Message**  
(Working in the present)

What was the main  
point then?

**The Main Idea  
of the Text  
(MIT)  
“Heart”**

**The Main Idea  
of the Message  
(MIM)  
“Heart”**

What is my main  
point today?

- Theme: What is the  
biblical author  
talking about?

- Theme: What am I  
talking about?

- Complement: What  
is the biblical author  
saying about what  
he is talking about?

- Complement: What  
am I saying about what  
I am talking about?

- Find the seams  
- Analyze the argument  
- Outline the text

**Structure  
the  
Scriptures  
“Skeleton”**

**Structure  
the  
Message  
“Skeleton”**

- Outline the Message  
- Complete Sentences  
- Present Tense  
Sentences  
- Tie all Points to the  
Text

**Study the  
Scriptures  
“Flesh”**

**Teach the  
Scriptures  
“Flesh”**

Observation  
Interpretation

Introduction  
Body  
1. Body  
2. Illustration  
3. Application  
Conclusion  
(Invitation)



## ANALYZING THE TEXT

Verse 1 (1/4 page to full page)

Verse 2 (1/4 page to full page)

Verse 3 (1/4 page to full page)

- 
1. Pray.
  2. Track the verbs and parse them.
  3. Look for key words needing definition.
  4. Look for repetition of phrases and words.
  5. Look for seams in the text which will inform the number of points and the nature of the teaching outline.
  6. Note the near and far context.
  7. Search for helpful and supporting Scripture.
  8. Write out any and all observations and applications you see in the text.
  9. Examine your study aids and write out any helpful insights (note the source for future reference when appropriate).
  10. Look for theological truth and avenues the text logically supports.
  11. Merge your exegesis into the outline structure of your teaching.

## **TITLE FOR THE TEXT**

- 
1. Pray
  2. Make it interesting, an "attention grabber."
  3. Relate it to the Main Idea of the Text (MIT) and the Main Idea of the Message (MIM).
  6. Create a title which can be fed by the main points of your message.
  7. Make it relevant.

## OUTLINING THE STUDY

- 
1. Pray.
  2. Let your exegesis drive and determine the outline.
  3. Have as many major points as the text naturally demands (locate the seams).
  4. Make sure major points and subpoints arise clearly and naturally out of the text. Be able to see your outline in the text.
  5. State your points in the present tense and complete sentences. Be clear, concise and true to the text.
  6. Make your points the application of the message. (Let them inform, instruct and inspire your people as to what they should do.)
  7. Make sure your major points connect with the title and the MIT and MIM.
  8. Make sure your subpoints connect with the major point they support.
  9. Do not overload your people with more than they can intellectually digest! (Teaching outlines are a great idea.)
  10. Cover and fill the skeleton of your outline with the meat and marrow of the exegesis.
  11. Write out your study merging all aspects of your preparation with a view of exalting our Lord and edifying your audience here and now.
  12. Practice reading your text repeatedly and out loud. Remember: it is a sin to read God's Word poorly.

## **SECTION 6**

**Observation: What do I see?**

## OBSERVATION: WHAT DO I SEE?

Becoming a diligent and trained student of Scripture is essential to the task of preaching and teaching. Unfortunately, even many pastors are stagnant when it comes to growing in their knowledge of the Bible.

### REASONS WHY WE AREN'T "IN" THE BIBLE

- Problem of *motivation*; we don't have the energy or see the necessity of why we should study.
- Problem of *priorities*; too busy, lack of time.
- Problem of *technique*; we don't know how.
- Problem of *preoccupation*; we just don't get around to it.

### WHY STUDY THE BIBLE

- A. Hebrews 5:11-14 - It is the means to develop spiritual maturity and Godly wisdom - the ability to see life from God's perspective and react and respond to it with His mind (Phil. 2:5)
- B. 1 Peter 2:2 - Scripture is the primary means of spiritual growth. Our aim as believers should be to be like Jesus (Rom. 8:28-30).

Howard Hendricks says, "There are three kinds of Bible students:

1. To the first it's like castor oil – bitter and hard to take.
2. To the second it's like shredded wheat – dry but nourishing.
3. To the third it's like peaches and cream – can't get enough."

- C. 2 Timothy 2:15 - The Bible gives the only guidelines to follow for presenting ourselves to God in a manner approved by Him (Rom. 12:1-2)

The bottom line of Christian experience is how we answer three questions we should ask ourselves daily:

1. Is the Lord well pleased?
2. Is the work well done?
3. Is the Word well used?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that all Scripture is profitable for:

1. *Doctrine*, for teaching
2. *Rebuke*, for where you're out of bounds
3. *Correction*, for conforming to image of Christ
4. *Training* in righteous living

The overall purpose - so we may be thoroughly equipped for God's work (cf. Eph. 4:11-16).

D. Study is a necessary means of being able to serve Christ.

We need to develop four basic skills in order to read the Bible and it means something in our lives! The skills are:

1. **Observation** – “What do I see?”
2. **Interpretation** – “What does it mean?”
3. **Correlation** – “How does it fit together (integrate)?”
4. **Application** – “How does it work? How can I translate it to my own experience?”

## **THE FIRST MAJOR STEP IN BIBLE STUDY IS OBSERVATION.**

### **I. DEVELOPING THE ABILITY TO SEE AND DETERMINING WHAT THE TEXT SAYS.**

Observation is taking a good hard look at what is in the text.

Why don't we get more out of God's Word?

1. We don't know how to read.
2. We don't know what to look for.

#### **A. Learn to read intelligently, intentionally, and interactively.**

Observation requires concentration. It is not a difficult procedure. It is not a complicated process. It can be mastered with practice and diligence.

### **RULES FOR READING THE BIBLE**

Learn to read better or faster.

- Learn to read as for the first time (the advantage of reading the text the original language).
- Learn to read as a love letter (personal).

**B. We need to read the Bible:**

- thoughtfully
- repeatedly
- often at one sitting
- start at the beginning
- patiently
- sometimes selectively

**C. When we read the Bible we need to ask these six questions:**

**WHO?**

- Who is the author of the book?
- To whom is the book written?
- Who are the characters in the book?
- Who is speaking?
- To whom is he speaking?
- Etc. Etc. Etc.

**WHAT?**

- What is the atmosphere of the book or passage? Friendly? Chastening? Loving?
- What is the author's general topic? What is he saying about his topic?
- What is the CONTEXT?
- What are the key words? What do they mean?
- What? What? What?

**WHEN?**

- When was the book written?
- When did this event happen in relation to other events?
- When was this prophecy fulfilled or has it been?
- “When” questions are important to ask especially in narrative literature such as the Gospels. This will help give you the “time” perspective.

## **WHERE?**

- Where was the book written?
- Where were the recipients of the book living?
- Can you locate the places mentioned on a map?
- Where else does this topic appear in Scripture?

## **WHY?**

- Why was the book written?
- Why does he include this material and not other things?
- Why does the author give so much space to that topic and so little to another?

## **HOW?**

- How many? How many times does the author use the same word in this book, chapter, passage, verse?
- How long?
- How much?
- How does he do this? Say this?
- How does this relate to the preceding statement? To the succeeding statement?

## **AS WE READ, WE ARE TO READ:**

<b>Prayerfully</b>	recall God's promises and claim them.
<b>Imaginatively</b>	identify with it.
<b>Reflectively</b>	meditatively; take time.
<b>Purposefully</b>	what's the purpose in light of...
<b>Acquisitively</b>	how can I hold on to it?
<b>Telescopically</b>	in light of the whole.



## II. LEARN WHAT TO LOOK FOR

To see the text is to observe what information God has put in a biblical passage. See the details and seek meaning from those details. Make all possible observations from a text.

### 1. Look for key terms.

(i.e., the verbs, significant concepts, repetition)

#### LOOK FOR:

things that are *emphasized*  
things that are *repeated*  
things that are *related* and how  
things that are *alike* (uses words like “as” or “like”)  
things that are *unlike/unusual* (contrasting words such as “but”)  
things that are *true to life*

### 2. Look for atmosphere.

Last words are lasting words. Last words usually flow from a deep concern.

### 3. Observe relationships

Some kinds of relationships you will observe are:

- a. **Grammatical relationships** - How are words put together in the text? Basic observations would include relationships between tenses (past, present, future), number (singular, plural), and gender (masculine, feminine, neuter).
- b. **Logical relationships** - How are thoughts put together in the text? How does the author build a case or argument for his point? **Chronological and/or geographical relationships** - What are the times and places that are involved in the text?
- c. **Psychological relationships** - Are there any psychological aspects to this text, which are stated or implied in the words?
- d. **Contextual relationships** - In what context does this text occur? You will need to take immediate and wider contexts into account.
  - The context of the Bible
  - The context of the book
  - The context of the text
- e. **Relationships in genre** - Relationships in genre have to do with the kind of biblical literature in which a passage is found. Here are some kinds of literature that are found in the Bible.
  - *Teaching* - didactic or discourse material like Jesus' sermons or the epistles.
  - *Narratives* - narration of historical events.
  - *Poetry* - Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and others.
  - *Parables* - primarily in the parables of Christ.
  - *Miracles* - primarily found in three periods of biblical history (Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, the Lord and the apostles).

- *Prophetic* - futuristic books like sections of Daniel, Ezekiel, Revelation, and also the major and minor prophets of the Old Testament.
- *Apocalyptic* - prophetic imagery depicting endtime events.

#### 4. Seek meaning from the details of a passage.

Seeking meaning deals with interpreting the observations, and seeing and seeking are most often and best done simultaneously. Interpretation is basically asking questions of your observations and answering them.

Seeking meaning from the Details

1. Asking Questions
2. Answering Questions
3. Analyzing Answers
4. Applying Answers

#### A. ASKING QUESTIONS

You must ask many good questions. Ask questions of the words. Ask questions of the relationships between the words.

*Seeing details*

Words

Relationships

*Seeking meaning*

Questions for words

Questions for relationships

1. Ask what the words mean today.
2. Ask what the words meant at the time they were written.
3. Ask how the Bible or the author used these words elsewhere and how other biblical authors used them (marginal references, concordances, key phrases, and repeated statements in your text are all important).

#### SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Background Questions

Fact Questions

Meaning Questions

Application Questions

## B. ANSWERING QUESTIONS

The plain, natural interpretation of Scripture (some call it “literal,” and others call it “grammatical-historical interpretation”) is what the expositor is after. Basically, it is interpreting Scripture on its own terms that is most important in understanding its meaning.

## C. ANALYZING ANSWERS

Robert Traina in *Methodical Bible Study* (p. 181) speaks of three dangers in interpreting Scripture:

1. Misinterpretation - assigning the wrong meaning to a passage.
2. Subinterpretation - the failure to ascertain the full meaning of a passage.
3. Superinterpretation - attributing more significance to a passage than is actually implicit in it.

You will analyze your answers with the following test:

***The Test of Authenticity*** - Can you make a good case that your interpretation is authentic?

***The Test of Unity*** – Is there unity of meaning between the terms, affirmations, and interpretation of the text? Is there a contradiction or discrepancy in my interpretation?

***The Test of Consistency*** – Is your interpretation consistent with the rest of the chapter, book, and the Bible? Can you explain an apparent difficulty?

***The Test of Simplicity*** – Is your interpretation simple or contrived? Plain or mystical? Easily stated and understood or heavily supported by allusions and concoctions or arguments?

***The Test of Honesty*** - Have you been careful not to read yours or others’ prejudgments and preconceptions into the text?

\*Since our interpretations are not infallible we must always leave open the possibility for change, as new evidence and/or questions are brought to bear on the interpretation.

## D. APPLYING ANSWERS

Preaching/Teaching has to do with transferring information that transforms people. What we preach and teach ought to change lives.

First we must and will apply Scripture in our own lives. Then we will show people how to integrate biblical truth into their lives.

Application may be *content* oriented, or it may be *conduct* oriented.

Often these two orientations in application are intermingled, simply because people will often do only what they know, believe and value.

To make proper application you must ask the following rigorous questions:

1. What is the application (present-day relevance) of the text?
2. What kind of application should you draw from the text?  
Content, conduct, or conduct based on content?
3. Is my application really based on this text? Does it have the authenticity of the text behind it?
4. What will convince my audience that this is the application from the text?
5. How can I be sure that the people will understand the application of the text? That is, we cannot take it for granted that they have gotten the application. Application is not automatic. Actually, people are not prone to apply truths to themselves. They would rather apply them to someone else!

Dispense with the applications that do not carry textual authority or have textual warranty, even if they are true.

Wayne McDill at SEBTS says 6 skills are essential in the process of observation:

1. Skill in observation depends heavily on ones motivation.
2. Skill in observation demands an eye for detail.
3. Skill in observation calls for healthy learners curiosity.
4. Skill in observation requires a willingness to postpone judgement.
5. Skill in observation demands a ruthless realism about the facts.
6. Skill in observation requires knowing what to look for.

Specifically, he says we must look for:

1. Main themes emphasized by the amount of discussion.
2. Supporting materials which clarifies main ideas.
3. Cause and effect relationship of ideas.
4. Questions and answers focusing attention.
5. Progression of thought toward a climax or conclusion.
6. Comparisons between ideas or persons.
7. Contrast of ideas, character, or behavior.
8. Conditional statement in the if...then pattern.
9. Correlative structure.
10. Reasons cited by the writer.
11. Purpose statements.
12. Results.
13. Significant words carrying the weight of meaning.
14. Verb tense apparent in the English translation.
15. Descriptions used by the writer.
16. Repetition of ideas, words or phrases.
17. Figurative language of various kinds.
18. Assertions carrying the writers convictions.
19. Commands or admonitions which apply theological truths.

McDill points out that the biblical world is a different world from our own, and those distances separate us or prevent us from getting inside the Bible world.

- A. **Historical Distances** - The Bible is the only record of what happened in some ancient civilizations.
- B. **Literary Distance** - These documents contain various forms of literature, some strange to us. [They were also written in a different language]
- C. **Theological Distance** - We must deal with the theological mystery of the religions of the ancient people who were the enemies, captors and neighbors of God's people.

Through careful and faithful observation of the whole counsel of God, these challenges can be overcome, and the Word of God made alive in a new and relevant way to those whom we minister the Word.

## **SECTION 7**

**Interpretation: What does it mean?**

# THE ART OF INTERPRETATION

(Determining What the Author Meant By What and How He Said It)

*“The aim of good interpretation is simple: to get at the “plain meaning” of the text.... The most important ingredient one brings to that task is enlightened common senses.”*

-Gordon Fee

*“Many heresies or occasions for controversy through the ages could have been avoided if every interpretation of scripture had been subjected to the test of total scripture.”*

- James W. Cox, *Preaching* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 65.

*“In expounding the Word of God, there is a grave responsibility upon the preacher to convey the truth without distortion.”*-Charles Koller, p.64.

*“With eternities at stake, the hearers can not afford to be in error, nor can the spiritual teacher whom he trusts.”* (Ibid.)

*“Every man has a right to his opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts.”* (Ibid.)

*“The integrity of the pulpit demand accuracy, thoroughness, and a scrupulous regard for text and context.”* (Ibid., p. 65.)

**A Vocabulary for Interpreting the Bible**  
**(from Bob Stein's *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*)**

Meaning - that pattern of meaning the author willed to convey by the words (shareable symbols) he used.

Implications - those meanings in a text of which the author was unaware but, nevertheless, legitimately fall within the pattern of meaning he willed.

Significance - how a reader responds to the meaning of a text; the way meaning applies to the reader (meaning belongs to the author; significance belongs to the reader, p. 44)

Subject Matter – the content or “stuff” talked about in a text.

Understanding – the correct mental grasp of the author's meaning.

Interpretation – the verbal or written expression of a reader's understanding of the author's meaning.

Mental Acts – the experiences the author went through when writing the text.

Norms of Language - the range of meanings allowed by the words (verbal symbols) of a text (also called semantic domain).

Norms of Utterance - the specific meaning that the author has given to a word, phrase, sentence, and the like in a text.

Literary Genre – the literary (or discourse) form being used by the author and the rules governing that form.

Context - the willed meaning that an author gives to the literary materials surrounding his text.

Referential Language - language that primarily passes on information/facts. It is language that appeals to the “mind.”

Commissive Language - language that has as its main goal evoking decisions, conveying emotions, eliciting feelings, and arousing the emotions. It is language which appeals to the “heart.”

Proverb - a short pithy saying, frequently using metaphorical language, which expresses a general truth. Proverbs are not laws or even promises. They are general observations learned from a wise and careful look at life.



# THE PROCESS OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpretation. It is a science because it follows certain rules. It is an art because it is a skill one develops with practice.

Hermeneutics is the study of methodological principles of interpretation which allows us to take what we see and determine what it means.

Three Truths to remember:

1. It takes time - to expose oneself to the brilliance of revealed truth.
2. There is more truth in the Bible than we can grasp in one or many readings. Infinite, eternal truth has this nature.
3. It takes practice and experience - skills to develop an understanding of the text with accuracy.

## A. SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION – ANSWERING THE QUESTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- **Content** - What is actually before you in the text. It is discovered by the results of your observational study. How to read and what to look for is the key (there is a huge difference between seeing and reading).
- **Clue** - The more time spent in observation, the less time you will spend in interpretation and the more accurate will be the results of your interpretation.
- **Context** - What goes before and after? (There is both a near and a far context).
- **Comparison** - Compare Scripture with Scripture.  
\*Remember the parts always take on meaning in the light of the whole.
- **Culture** - What was the social setting at that time? What was the historical situation? What was the *chronos*, language, customs, political environment?
- **Consultation** - Use resource tools (after you have done personal study). This includes dictionaries, atlases, concordance, commentaries, etc.; check your interpretation with other great women and men of God. If you are the only one to see the text a certain way, you are probably wrong.
- **Construction** - Build an exegetically and homiletically sound outline that arises clearly out of the text. Let the text determine the structure of your outline.

Remember: First comes God's Word, then secondary sources!

## **B. TEN INTERPRETIVE RULES**

Just as there must be the proper use of the proper tools, there must also be the observance of some simple rules if accurate interpretation is to take place. Remember that hermeneutics is both an art and a science; a science because there are rules and principles.

1. Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.
2. Interpret difficult passages in the light of clear passages. Let the Bible interpret itself.
3. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.
4. Remember that Scripture has only ONE MEANING but many applications.
  - One Meaning (Sense)
  - Many Applications (Significance)
5. Interpret words and passages in harmony with their meaning in the time of the author.

### **INTERPRETATION IS BRIDGING THE GAPS**

- The Language Gap
  - The Historical Gap
  - The Cultural Gap
  - The Geographical Gap
  - The Literary Gap
  - The Theological Gap
6. Interpret Scripture in light of its PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.
  7. Remember you must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically
  8. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it includes all the Scriptures say about it. DO not practice “selective citation” or “proof-texting.”
  9. Distinguish between the PROVERBS and the PROMISES of God.
  10. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as Scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves in a higher unity.

CHARLES KOLLER SAYS 3 BASIC STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE SCRIPTURAL PASSAGE:

1. The Preacher should determine the subject matter of the passage.
2. Divide the passage into sections and dissect the principal idea into sections.
3. Reread the passage as often as necessary to ascertain ideas that sustain and explain the principal idea or superior emphasis.

KOLLER THEN CAUTIONS PREACHERS TO MAINTAIN A WATCHFUL EYE FOR THE FOLLOWING 10 ITEMS:

1. Change of persons.
2. Progression related to time, place, and action.
3. Examples or instances.
4. Enunciation of ideas, principles, or teachings.
5. Parallelism of ideas.
6. Contrasting ideas.
7. Indications of cause and effect.
8. Division of the whole into units.
9. Repetition.
10. Transitional clauses or connective words.

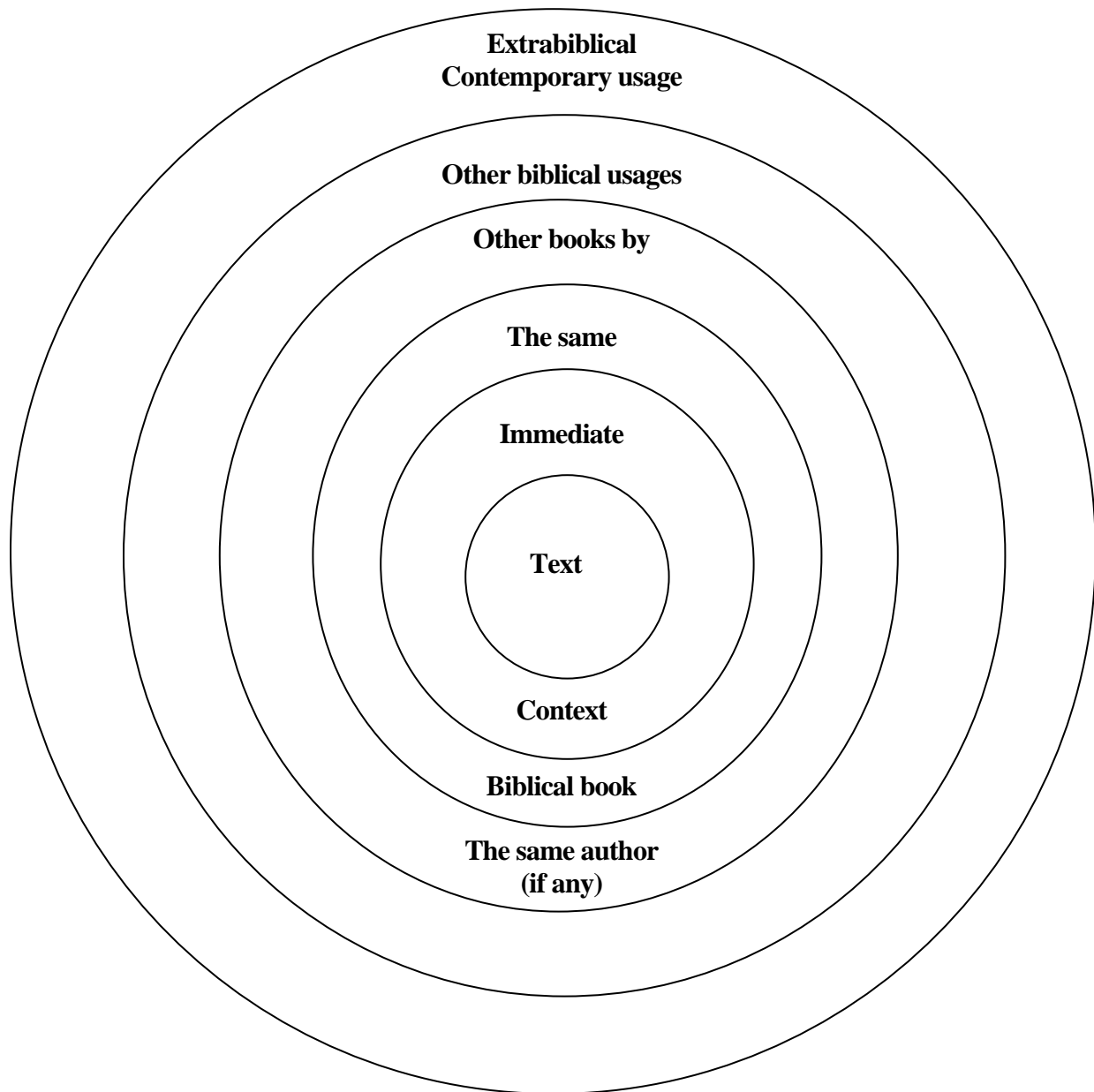
Once these steps have been followed, the preacher should proceed to formulate his analysis of the passage.

SIX STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS.

1. Limit the analysis to the contents of the passage.
2. Follow the sequence of the passage.
3. Relate the main points to particular verses in the passage.
4. Relate sub-points to particular verses in the passage.
5. Be concise.
6. Omit irrelevant material.

After intensive investigation, Koller suggests that preachers allow the acquired information “to incubate in their hearts.”

## THE PREACHER/TEACHER AND PREPARATION: INVESTIGATION



## **THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION**

1. Determine the book's occasion
2. Study the key words
3. Cross reference
4. Identify figures of speech
5. Identify literary devices
6. Identify the type of literature
7. Study the composition

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETATION**

1. The context rules when interpreting the text.
2. The text must be interpreted in light of all Scripture.
3. Scripture will never contradict itself.
4. Scripture should be interpreted literally.
5. Do not develop doctrine from obscure or difficult passages.
6. Discover the author's original intended meaning.
7. Check your conclusions using reliable resources.

## Analyzing The Text

Verse 1 (1/4 page to a full page)

Verse 2 (1/4 page to a full page)

Verse 3 (1/4 page to a full page)

- 
1. Pray.
  2. Track the verbs and parse them.
  3. Look for key words needing definition.
  4. Look for repetition of phrases and words.
  5. Look for seams in the text which will inform the number of points and the nature of the sermon outline.
  6. Note the near and far context.
  7. Search for helpful and supporting Scripture.
  8. Write out any and all observations and applications you see in the text.
  9. Examine your study aids and write out any helpful insights (note the source for future reference and appropriate).
  10. Look for exegetical truth and avenues the text logically supports.
  11. Merge your exegesis into the outline structure of your sermon.

## Appendix 1

### A STUDY METHOD FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING

John MacArthur, Jr.

(*Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, 209-222)

Careful and diligent Bible study is the key to effective expository preaching. Because the Bible is God's Holy Word, it must be treated with respect, not expounded flippantly or carelessly. An effective method of sermon preparation is based on general rules for Bible study.

### THREE BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLE STUDY

#### 1. Observation: Answers the question: What does the passage say?

Includes a broad awareness of the terms, structure, and literary forms of the passage.

##### 3 Be's

- Be careful
- Be systematic
- Be persistent

#### 2. Interpretation: Answers the question: What does the passage mean?

- It is concerned with bridging the gap between the Bible writers and the present day.
- The Language gap - understand the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- The Cultural gap - understand the culture of the time.
- The Geographical gap - essential in understanding a passage like 1 Thess. 1:8.
- The Historical gap - often the key to interpretation.

#### 3. Application - Answers the question: How does the passage relate to me?

- Are there examples to follow?
- Are there commands to obey?
- Are there errors to avoid?
- Are there sins to forsake?
- Are there promises to claim?
- Are there new thoughts about God?
- Are there principles to live by?
- Meditation - focusing the mind on one subject, involving reason, imagination, and emotions – is an important final step in the process.

*Excellent Bible study skills are the foundation upon which good expository sermons are built. The expository preacher is, by definition, a skilled Bible student. He interprets Scripture accurately, applies its truth in his own life, and then proclaims them to his congregation.*

### STUDYING FOR THE EXPOSITORY SERMON

1. Read the Book - become familiar with the theme, understand the context, put together a general outline and identify key verses.
2. Read the Passage - familiarize yourself with the passage, try to memorize it.
3. Find the Main Point - the 'big idea' or 'the proposition.' It is often connected with the main verb.
4. Write it out in a complete sentence.
5. Organize the Passage - Look for the subordinate points (support the main clause). This is the first step in outlining the passage.
6. Analyze the Structure - Work through the passage in detail in the original language. Use study tools. Diagram the passage. At this point consult good commentaries.
7. Put Together an Exegetical Outline - The final step in the process is to put together a preliminary outline. This is not alliterated. This outline is drawn from the passage.
8. Add Illustrations - Search for the best Bible illustrations, then add other illustrations - if necessary.

(Write Introduction and Conclusion)

### THREE KEY WORDS

1. **Inductive** - We approach the text to find out what it means.
2. **Exegetical** - Follow proper exegetical and hermeneutical principles and practice.
3. **Expositional** - Opens up the Word and exposes the less obvious meanings and applications it contains.



## Appendix 2

### FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative (meaning) – “the representation of one concept in terms of another because the nature of the two things compared allows such an analogy.” -(B. Mickelsen, p. 179)

#### A. Short Figures of Speech

1. **Simile** (resemblance - an explicitly stated comparison using the words “like” or “as”).
  - a. 1 Peter 1:24
  - b. Luke 10:3
2. **Metaphor** (representation) - a comparison by direct assertion or description.
  - a. Isaiah 40:6
  - b. Luke 8:21
1. **Metonymy** (“change of name”) - the substitution of one word for another.
  - a. The cause for the effect: Luke 16:29
  - b. The effect for the cause: Isaiah 22:22
2. **Synecdoche** (transfer) - the substitution of related ideas one for another.
  - a. The part for the whole: Psalm 87:2
  - b. The whole for the part: Luke 2:1
3. **Personification** - ascribing of personal characteristics to animals or objects.
  - a. Isaiah 55:12
  - b. Psalm 114
4. **Apostrophe** - a direct address to a thing as if it were a person.
  - a. Judges 5:3,4
  - b. Zechariah 13:7
7. **Ellipsis** - the omission of a word or phrase necessary for the complete thought.
  - a. Acts 18:6
  - b. Romans 8:3
8. **Hyperbole** - a conscious exaggeration by the author for heightened effect.
  - a. John 21:25
  - b. Deuteronomy 1:28
9. **Litotes** - an understatement or negative to express an affirmation.
  - a. Acts 1:5
  - b. 1 Thess. 2:14,15
10. **Irony** - using language in an opposite or different meaning than stated for the purpose of ridicule.
  - a. I Kings 18:27
  - b. Job 12:2

11. **Paradox** - a statement of truth in what appears a contradiction of ideas.
  - a. Matt. 13:12
  - b. Mark 8:35
12. **Anthropomorphism** - ascribing human characteristics to God.
  - a. Psalm 19:1
  - b. Psalm 59:1
13. **Anthropopathism** - ascribing human emotions to God.
  - a. Psalm 95:10
  - b. Zechariah 8:1
14. **Euphemism** - the substitution of a less direct or offensive word for one more graphic.
  - a. Judges 3:24
  - b. Acts 1:25
15. **Rhetorical Question** - a question asked which does not expect a verbal response but one which forces the responder to consider the implications mentally.
  - a. Jeremiah 32:37
  - b. Romans 8:31-34

## B. DISTINGUISHING THE FIGURATIVE AND THE LITERAL

1. Always use the literal sense unless there is some good reason for departure.  
Ex. Rev. 7:1-8
2. Use the figurative sense when the passage is stated to be figurative.  
Ex. Zech. 12:6
3. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves an impossibility.  
Ex. Jer. 1:18; Rev. 1:16
4. Use the figurative sense if the literal commands immoral action.  
Ex. John 6:53
5. Use the figurative sense if the expression fits into one of the classes of the figures of speech.  
Ex. Zech. 12:2
6. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the context and scope of the passage.  
Ex. Zech. 13:1; Matt. 5:42; Rev. 20:1 (chain)
7. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the general character and style of the book.
8. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the plan and purpose of the author.
9. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves a contradiction with a parallel passage.
10. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves a contradiction of doctrine.

### C. SUMMARY PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

1. Determine if a figure of speech is used.
2. Determine the image and referent.
3. State the purpose for the figure.
4. Don't assume a figure always means the same thing.
5. Place limits of control by the use of logic and language.

### D. SAMPLE PROCEDURE

<b>FIGURE</b>	<b>IMAGE</b>	<b>REFERENT</b>	<b>POINT OF COMPARISON</b>
Simile (Psalm 1:3)	Tree	Believer	Growth, Fruitfulness, Stability

The devotional method of studying the Bible is rooted in a strong desire to apply the Bible to one's everyday life. It correctly believes that the Words of Scripture are clear enough to be understood in their basic message, but it does not demand that all Scripture be equally clear and perspicuous. The reader is dependent on the Holy Spirit for the work of illuminating those Scriptures use in a devotional study. Especially included in the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit are the issues of application, the ministry of encouragement and the task of convicting of sin as readers are exposed to the Scriptures.

Central to the devotional method is the act of meditating on the Word of God. Meditation does not have as its goal self-abnegation, as it usually does in oriental religions and some of the contemporary cults. Instead, biblical meditation seeks to establish communion with and the worship of the living God by involving the entirety of one's person - body, soul, and mind. It uses the Scriptures as the place where meditation is centered.

**Rules for Recognizing Hyperbole (or Exaggeration) in Scripture**  
(from Bob Stein's *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*)

It is probably a hyperbole if:

1. The statement is literally impossible.
2. The statement conflicts with what the speaker says elsewhere.
3. The statement conflicts with the actions of the speaker elsewhere.
4. The statement conflicts with the teachings of the Old Testament.
5. The statement conflicts with the teachings of the New Testament.
6. The statement is interpreted by another biblical author in a non-literal way.
7. The statement has not been fulfilled.
8. The statement would not achieve its desired goal.
9. The statement uses the literary form prone to exaggeration.
10. The statement uses universal language.

## **TYPOLGY**

### 1. The vocabulary of typology in the New Testament

- a. Type (Gk. *-tupos*, 14x)
- b. Antitype (Gk. *-antitupos*, 2x)
- c. Example (Gk. *-hupodeigma*, 6x)
- d. Shadow (Gk. *-skia*, 7x)
- e. Figure (Gk. *-parabole*)

### 2. The definition of a type (as distinguished from an illustration)

A type is a person, event, or things, which while having a historical reality in the Old Testament was designed by God to prefigure (foreshadow) in a preparatory way a real person, event, or thing so designated in the New Testament that it corresponds to and fulfills the type.

An illustration is a person, event or thing having historical reality, that pictures (is analogous to) some corresponding spiritual truth in a natural and unforced way and is not explicitly designated in the New Testament as a type.

### 3. Designated types in the New Testament

	Type	Antitype	Scripture
<b>P E R S O N S</b>	1. Melchizedek	Christ's perpetual priesthood	Hebrews 7:3, 15-17
	2. Aaron	Christ's priestly ministry	Hebrews 5:4-5
	3. Adam	Christ (2 <sup>nd</sup> Adam)	Romans 5:12ff
<b>Event</b>	4. Passover	Death of Christ	1 Corinthians 5:7
<b>T H I N G S</b>	5. Tabernacle	Way of access to God through Christ	Hebrews 8:5, 9:23, 24
	6. Veil	Access to God through Christ	Hebrews 10:20
	7. Sacrifices	Christ is our sacrifice	Hebrews 9:8-9
	8. Sabbath	Spiritual rest in the finished work of Christ	Colossians 2:17 Hebrews 4:3, 9, 11

4. Principles for the interpretation of types
  - a. Identify the literal meaning of the item in its historical context.
  - b. Look for the major area of resemblance between the type and the antitype.
  - c. Ascertain the purpose and function of both the type and the antitype in their respective contexts.
  - d. Recognize the points of difference and contrast between the type and the antitype.
  - e. Guard against overpressing the analogy in seeking what is farfetched and vague (allegorization).
  - f. Distinguish between types and illustrations.
  - g. Avoid using types to prove doctrine.
  - h. Recognize that types look back from the N.T. advantage as a way of bringing into sharper focus the person and work of Christ.

## DIFFERENT KINDS OF PSALMS

Psalms of Zion	48, 84
Royal Psalms	2, 8, 72, 110
Hymns to God	19, 24
Wisdom Psalms	1, 127-128
Penitential Psalms	6, 32
Imprecatory Psalms	58, 137
Praise Psalms	106, 111-113
Lament Psalms	13, 142

## **CLUES FOR INTERPRETING NARRATIVE**

### **CONTEXT**

Any individual narrative should be interpreted in light of the whole account, i.e., Mark 5:1-20 should be interpreted in light of Mark 1:1-16:8.

### **AUTHORIAL/EDITORIAL/NARRATOR COMMENTS**

The author or narrator gives clues to his reader of how to interpret a text.

Examples:

- (1) Mark 5:1-20 should be interpreted by such editorial comments as: Mark 1:1, 34; 3:11-12.
- (2) 1 Kings 15:5-6; 22:43; 2 Kings 14:3-4; 2 Chronicles 33:2-8
- (3) 1 Kings 12:15, 15:29; 16:12, 34; 2 Kings 1:17; 23:16; 24:2

### **THEMATIC STATEMENTS**

The author or narrator sometimes provides a thematic statement which reveals the theme of his work: Cf. Acts. 1:8 with 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31. (How do Peter and Paul fit into this?)

### **REPETITION**

Cf. Judges 3:7-9; 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25



## Appendix 3

### PARABLE

A parable has been called an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The word ‘parable’ is derived from the Greek *parabolē*, meaning “to throw alongside or “putting things side by side.” Mark Bailey defines a parable as “a figurative narrative that is true to life and is designed to convey through analogy some specific spiritual truths usually relative to God’s Kingdom program.”

A parable therefore, is a form of teaching which presents the listener with interesting illustrations from which can be drawn moral and spiritual truths; often it is designed to inculcate a single truth or answer a single question. The parable was an appropriate form of communication for bringing to men the message of the kingdom of God, since its function is to jolt them into seeing things in a new way. D.A. Carson has written, “[P]arables...in Jesus’ hands were often meant to shock and ‘interpret’ the hearer to himself, as much as to be interpreted by the hearer...” They are means of enlightenment and persuasion, intended to bring the hearers to the point of decision.

It is impossible always to draw a clear-cut distinction between parable and allegory in the stories told by Jesus; some of his stories were clearly intended to illustrate several lessons, as in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32). The parables must be understood in their original historical settings within the ministry and teaching of Jesus.

Parables are distinguished from other literary figures in that they are narrative in form but figurative in meaning. Parables use both similes and metaphors to make their analogies. Jesus utilized parables to motivate hearers to make proper spiritual decisions. To Jesus’ original audiences the parables both revealed and concealed new truths regarding God’s kingdom. Those who rightly responded were called disciples and to them it was granted to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. The same truth was concealed from those who, because of hardened hearts, were unreceptive to the message of Jesus.

The exposition of the parables for today must be based on as careful an understanding of what Jesus meant by the parables as is possible; otherwise we fall back into the error of regarding them as illustrations of general truths. The parables were meant to force people to decide about their attitude to Jesus and his message and thus to bring them into a new relationship with Him and the Kingdom of God.

Roy Zuck suggests nine kinds of occasions or purposes that led to Jesus’ parables: parables in answer to questions, parables in answer to requests, parables in answer to complaints, parables given with a stated purpose, parables of the kingdom given because of Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah, parables following an exhortation or principle, parables that illustrate a situation, and parables with the purpose implied not stated.

Bob Stein suggests asking seven questions to help identify the main point of a parable.

1. What terms are repeated in the parable? Which are not?
2. Upon what does the parable dwell, i.e., to what or to whom does the parable devote the most space?
3. What is the main contrast found in the parable?
4. What comes at the end of the parable?
5. What is spoken in direct discourse in the parable?
6. What characters appear in the parable? Which are the least important? Which are the two most important characters? (Usually a parable focuses on two characters to establish its main point.)
7. How would you have told the parable? If Jesus told it differently, does this reveal anything?

Craig Blomberg seeks to synthesis our understanding of Jesus' parables under four major ideas:

1. Jesus clearly has three main topics of interest: the graciousness of God, the demands of discipleship and the dangers of disobedience.
2. The central theme uniting all of the lessons of the parables is the kingdom of God. It is both present and future. It includes both a reign and a realm. It involves both personal transformation and social reform.
3. The teaching of the parables raises the question of Jesus' identity. Who is the one who, by his teaching, can claim to forgive sins, pronounce God's blessing on social outcasts and declare that final judgment will be based on the responses people make to him? Christological claims are concealed in the parables. They are not as direct as in some other strands of the Gospel tradition, but they are present nevertheless.
4. Jesus' parables include implicit claims to deity. Jesus associates himself with authority figures in his parables which obviously stand for the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. His audiences must decide whether to accept these claims and worship him or reject them as misguided or even blasphemous. But Jesus' parables leave no neutral ground for casual interest or idle curiosity. They sharply divided their original audiences into disciples and opponents. They must continue to function in the same way today.

Jesus' parables are unique. The parables of other teachers can to some extent be separated from the teachers themselves, but Jesus and his parables are inseparable. To fail to understand him is to fail to understand his parables.

Mark Bailey, "Guidelines for Interesting Jesus Parables," *BibSac* (Jan.-Mar., 1998), 29-38.

Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 326-27.

D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 139.

I. Howard Marshall and R.V.G. Tasker, "Parable," *New Bible Dictionary*, 867-869.

Bob Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables*, 56.

## **THE FORM OF ANCIENT LETTERS**

### **SALUTATION**

A to B – Greetings (Acts 15:23; 23:26; James 1:1)

Shalom

Grace

### **THANKSGIVING and/or PRAYER**

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ” – Rom. 1:8

“I give thanks to God” – 1 Cor. 1:4

“We give thanks to God always” – 1 Thess. 1:2

### **BODY OF LETTER**

Romans 1:18-11:26

Galatians 1:6-6:10

1 Corinthians 1:10-16:12

### **EXHORTATION AND INSTRUCTION**

Romans 12:1-15:32

Galatians 5:1-6:10

Colossians 3:1-4:6

### **CONCLUSION**

A wish for peace (2 Cor. 13:11); Greeting (1 Cor. 16:1-20a);  
Kiss (Rom 16:16); Concluding Autograph (1 Cor. 16:21);  
Benediction (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23-24)

## **SECTION 8**

### **The Exegetical Process Observations and Methods of Gifted Expositors of Scripture**

## **“THE EXEGETICAL PROCESS”: OBSERVATIONS AND METHODS OF GIFTED EXPOSITORS OF SCRIPTURE**

*“If exegetical theology is worth anything, it must aid the student and pastor/teacher in bridging the gap between the original situation and the present-day audience”*

-(Kaiser, 186)

*“The Word is supernatural, and woe to the preacher who leaves the supernatural for the natural; who sets aside the sword of the Spirit to use in its stead a blade of his own tempering!”*

-Howard Cosby, Chancellor of the University of the City of New York in the late 1800s (quoted in *Berean Call*, Feb. 1999, pg. 3)

*“A text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or his or her readers.”*

-(Fee and Stuart, *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, 64.)

### **INTRODUCTION:**

A commitment to historical-grammatical interpretation is a natural complement to a high view of biblical inspiration. Discerning the author's intended meaning is a "moral" presupposition which guides our exegetical and homiletical work.

*“We cannot be acquitted as scholarly exegetes until we have led the church to understand how to respond to the very words that we have analyzed most critically and carefully.”*

-Walt Kaiser, *Towards An Exegetical Theology*, 247)

When one surveys specific approaches to the exegesis of Scripture among evangelicals, one discovers a variety of methods and, at the same time, “common threads” that run through each model. Contrasting and comparing these proves most insightful and helpful: to our task.

## **I. HADDON ROBINSON'S 10 STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPOSITORY MESSAGES.**

1. Choose the passage to be preached.
2. Study your passage and gather your notes.
3. As you study the passage, relate the parts to each other to determine the exegetical idea and its development.
4. Submit the exegetical idea to 3 development questions:
  1. What does it mean?
  2. Is it true?
  3. What difference does it make? (application)
5. In light of the audiences knowledge and experience, think through the exegetical idea and state it in its most exact, memorable sentence possible.
6. Determine the purpose of the sermon.
7. Thinking about the homiletical idea, ask yourself how this idea should be handled to accomplish your purpose.
8. Having decided how the idea must be developed to accomplish your purpose, outline the sermon.
9. Fill in the outline with supporting materials that explain, prove, apply or amplify the points.
10. Prepare the introduction and the conclusion of the sermon.

**II. DAVID ALLEN (Dean of Theology, SWBTS):**  
**HOW TO ANALYZE A TEXT OF SCRIPTURE FOR PREACHING**  
**OR TEACHING**

1. ANY TIME YOU PREACH OR TEACH GOD'S WORK, YOU SHOULD BE ATTEMPTING TO DO SEVEN THINGS IN YOUR STUDY, PREPARATION AND DELIVERY:

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. OBSERVATION    | (What do I see?)  |
| 2. INVESTIGATION  | (What is the background?)                                 |
| 3. INTERPRETATION | (What does it mean?)                                      |
| 4. ILLUSTRATION   | (How can I help the audience understand and remember it?) |
| 5. APPLICATION    | (How can I help the audience see how it works in life?)   |
| 6. MOTIVATION     | (How can I move the audience to obey the text?)           |
| 7. COMMUNICATION  | (How can I best deliver the message to the audience?)     |

2. IN ALL PREACHING/TEACHING, YOU WANT TO APPEAL TO THE TOTAL PERSON:

MIND                      EMOTIONS                      WILL

3. THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY METHODS (ORDERLY PROCEDURE) OF BIBLE STUDY:

1. INDUCTIVE/ANALYTIC - Begin with the parts and move toward the whole.
2. DEDUCTIVE/SYNTHETIC -Begin with the whole and move toward the parts.
3. REMEMBER THAT A CRUCIAL KEY IN BIBLE STUDY IS ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.

I have six faithful serving men  
Who taught me all I know,  
Their names are what and where and when  
and how and why and who.  
-Rudyard Kipling

## SOME “HOW TO” BOOKS ON EXEGESIS AND EXPOSITION OF A TEXT

Grant Osborne & Stephen Woodward, *Handbook for Bible Study* (1979)  
Fee & Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (1984)  
Frederick Danker, *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study* (Rev. Ed., 1993)  
Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology, Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (1981)  
Walter Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition* (1984)  
Thomas Schreiner, *Interpreting Pauline Epistles* (1990)  
John Beekman & John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (1974)  
David Black, *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek* (1988)  
Cotterell & Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (1989)

## **PROCEDURE FOR BIBLICAL EXEGESIS**

### **A. OBSERVATION**

1. Pray!
2. Read the text several times in English.
3. Read the text in Greek or Hebrew.
4. Make notes on what you observe in the text:

PEOPLE:	Who are the people in the text? Characters, etc.
PLAN:	What type of discourse is the text? (Expository, Narrative, Hortatory, etc.) What are the major chapter divisions of the entire book? What are major paragraph divisions of the text? What are key themes, words, doctrines, etc.?; note them.
PURPOSE:	Why is the author writing to the recipients? What does he tell the readers to do? What command forms appear? (Imperatives, Hortatory, Subjunctives, etc.)



## **B. INVESTIGATION**

Study the BACKGROUND of the text - Read a good introduction. Note the authorship, date, recipients, occasion, purpose, etc.

## **C. INTERPRETATION**

1. LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION:       Begin at the paragraph level.
  - a. What is the main thought of the paragraph?
  - b. How many sentences in the paragraph?
  - c. What is the relationship among the sentences? (Ex. - which sentences convey primary information, which contain secondary (subordinate) information?)
  - d. How many paragraphs are in the text?
  - e. What is the relationship of the paragraphs?
  - f. Which paragraphs convey the most important information?
2. GRAMMATICAL/SYNTACTICAL INTERPRETATION: Move to the sentence/clause level.
  - a. Diagram the sentence to determine Subject, Main Verb, and Object.
  - b. Identify independent clauses and dependent clauses.
  - c. Determine grammatical relationship of clauses to one another.
  - d. Decline nouns and parse verbs (if studying Greek text).
  - e. Compare different translations of the text.
3. LEXICAL INTERPRETATION: Move to the word level.
  - a. Do word studies of important nouns and verbs.
  - b. Note things like lexical repetition; words in same semantic domain (different words that have similar meanings).
4. DOCTRINAL INTERPRETATION:
  - a. What doctrines are presented, if any?
  - b. How is the author using this doctrine?

5. COMMENTARIES - Consult them now to check your interpretation and to gain new insight.

\*At this point you are ready to begin the actual writing of the sermon.

**D. ILLUSTRATION** - Choose good illustrations to help audience “see” the meaning.

**E. APPLICATION**

1. To you personally.
2. To the people you will be teaching or preaching:
  - a. How does this text apply to modern life?
  - b. Specific applications: Definite commands in the text.
  - c. General applications: based on teaching of the text.

**F. MOTIVATION**

Challenge them to obey the text; consequences and rewards, etc.

**G. COMMUNICATION**

Sermon delivery.

**III. JOHN MACARTHUR'S STUDYING FOR THE EXPOSITORY SERMON  
(*REDISCOVERING EXPOSITORY PREACHING*, 218-222)**

- Read the Book
- Read the Passage
- Find the Main Point
- Organize the Passage
- Analyze the Structure
- Put Together an Exegetical Outline
- Add Illustrations

#### **IV. JERRY VINES' PROCESS OF EXPOSITION**

Working with a Scripture passage is like dividing a block of wood. You examine the block of wood carefully, turning it from side to side, over and over. After noticing the natural divisions in the wood, you crack the wood in these places.

##### **INVESTIGATION**

Investigation answers the question, "What does the Scripture passage really say?" It is the fundamental step in Scripture exposition.

G. Campbell Morgan had four rules for studying a Bible book:

1. Read and gain an impression.
2. Think and gain an outline.
3. Meditate and gain an analysis.
4. Sweat and gain an understanding.

##### **A. Read Prayerfully**

##### **B. Read Carefully**

"Rudyard Kipling: "I kept six honest serving men; they taught me all I knew; their names are what and why and when and how and where and who. I sent them over land and sea, I sent them east and west; but after they had worked for me I give them all a rest."

\*Use these six words as you read the paragraph. (Meditation is also helpful.)

##### **C. Read Imaginatively**

1. Put yourself into the passage.
2. Live out what is taking place.
3. Role play the people who appear in the verses.
4. But do not go to the extreme.

\*Imagination is the difference between a good preacher and an average preacher. If imagination is used properly it can make the passage come alive.

##### **D. Read Obediently**

1. Look for Theme and Main Points.
2. Pursue Several Clues.
3. Look for repetitions of terms, phrases, clauses, or sentences.
4. Be aware of transitional words: then, therefore, wherefore, but, nevertheless, and meanwhile.
5. Pay attention to rhetorical questions.
6. Note a change in location, time, or setting.
7. Recognize when the writer gives a clue as to the meaning of the passage.

## INTERPRETATION

Interpretation answers the question, “What does this passage mean?”

### **A. Diagram the Passage**

(Using a block diagram, called a “syntactical display” by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., is helpful and illuminating as interpretation begins.)

### **B. Do Word Studies**

\* Process of doing word studies:

1. In the original languages, if possible, look for the meanings of words.
2. Check other occurrences in the Bible.
3. Compare the Old and New Testament usage of the word.

\* Considerations in doing word studies:

1. Find the usage of a word at time of the author.
2. Determine the grammatical use of the word.
3. Be aware of figures of speech in the Bible such as simile, metaphor, paradox, and hyperbole.

### **C. Study the Context**

The word context comes from two Latin words: *con*, which means “with” or “together,” and *texere*, which means “to weave.” Context deals with something woven together. One must be aware of the book's location in the Bible to know its literary form.

Kaiser points out five basic literary forms in the Bible:

1. Prose
2. Poetry
3. Historical Narrative
4. Wisdom Writings
5. Apocalyptic Literature

Kaiser notes four connections between a passage and its context:

1. Historical (events or facts)
2. Theological (doctrines)
3. Logical (arguments)
4. Psychological (expressions)

#### **D. Gather the Historical Data**

Gathering background data involves several matters:

1. Who wrote the passage under consideration?
2. Who is the speaker (if different from the writer)?
3. Who is the audience?
4. Is the time of year relevant?
5. What is the stage of revelation of the particular passage?

#### **E. Do Cross-Reference Work Let Scripture interpret Scripture.**

#### **F. Determine the Theological Significance**

#### **G. Consult Commentaries**

#### **H. Apply Proper Principles of Interpretation**

The ethnic division principle - do not confuse passages written to a specific category of the human race (Jews, Gentiles, or the Church) and those written to another group.

1. **The first mention principle** - the first time a topic is mentioned is key to understanding its meaning.
2. **The full meaning principle** - often subjects are given one comprehensive treatment in the Bible, which sheds light on other occurrences.
3. **The proportionate mention principle** - note the amount of space given in the Bible for a particular subject; magnify those truths that Scripture magnifies.
4. **The repeated mention principle** - often a subject will at first be given the barest treatment, but with repeated mentioning, additional details are given.
5. **The gap principle** - note instances where God leaps several centuries without comment.
6. **The salvation/fellowship principle** - we understand verses differently, depending on whether they deal with salvation or fellowship.
7. **The threefold principle** - i.e. salvation understood as past, present, and future.
8. **The recurrence principle** - the Bible may mention a subject again from a different standpoint, with a different purpose (i.e., Genesis 1 and 2).

#### **APPLICATION**

“What does the passage tell me, and the people to whom I preach, to do?”

#### **\*Self-Application**

The preacher is more ready to apply the truths of God's Word when he has first applied them to himself.

**V. WALTER LIEFIELD'S PREPARING THE TEXT (THE FACTS: PRACTICAL EXEGESIS)**

**1. SURVEY THE CONTEXT**

1. Observe the background
2. Note the "Connecting Tissue" between the Text and Its Content.
  - Thought Patterns
  - Verbal Patterns
  - Structural Patterns

**2. NOTE THE DOMINATE CHARACTERISTICS AND THEMES OF THE PASSAGE**

The hearers could lose confidence in the preacher when he ignores obvious phenomena in the text.

- Ideas and Concepts
- Doctrines
- Character Delineation
- Sequence of Events
- Rhetorical Questions
- Complex of Topics, Problems, or Circumstances

**3. SELECT SIGNIFICANT ITEMS FOR EXEGETICAL STUDY**

\*Key Question: "What items in the passage are truly significant?"

- Doctrinally Important
- Ethically Important
- Difficult to Understand
- Thematic in the Context, Book, or Corpus
- Crucial to Understanding of the Author's Intent
- Dependent on the Literal Form

## **VI. BRYAN CHAPPELL AND THE EXPOSITOR'S ASSIGNMENT**

### **1. THE PRIORITY OF THE TEXT**

#### **A. Begin Here**

Expository preaching points the preacher to the Scriptures as a beginning. The sermon is intended to explain what the Bible says.

#### **B. Considerations for Selecting a Passage**

1. Passage Length
2. Sermon Length

“Every sermon should seem like twenty minutes, even if it is much longer.”  
-J. Stott (54)
3. Concerns

God's preference is not always our own. Pastor's should evaluate, look back and forward in their plans and preaching ministry.
4. Catalysts

The following types of eventful preaching can strengthen the preacher's ability and respectability:

  - Series
  - Contexts

The context of the preacher and the congregation will ultimately aid in decision making about delivery and application.
5. Cautions

The author's general cautions include: do not avoid familiar texts, do not purposely avoid any text, and do not use spurious texts. The preacher must remember the inspiration of the Scripture, and be guided by its completeness.

#### **C. Tools for Interpreting a Passage**

Many different tools can be used to assist the preparer of the sermon. Preaching is at its best when it comes from the Holy Spirit stirring the heart of the preacher. These tools are guides and suggestions.

“Every preacher is to regard himself as an original exhibitor and enforcer of the terms of human salvation; a channel of gracious speech, markedly different from every other.” -J. R. Wilson

#### **D. Principles for Interpreting a Passage**

1. Use grammatical-historical method.
2. Observe the historical, cultural, and literary context.
3. Determine the redemptive context.

## 2. THE COMPONENTS OF EXPOSITION

### A. The Goal

People long to understand how the text of Scripture applies to their lives. The goal of expository preaching is to do just this. “However, a true expository sermon uses all its resources to move to application. It is the main thing to be done.” -D. Larson  
“The application of the sermon is not merely an appendage to the discussion or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing to be done.” - J. Broadus (79).

### B. The Pattern

Jesus set a pattern on the road to Emmaus by beginning with Moses and the prophets and explaining what the text said about himself (Luke 24).

### C. The Components

Explanation, illustration, and application act as the proof, the clarification or the specification of the exhortation the preacher offers and the transformation that God requires.

### D. The Balance

Remember, explanations prepare the mind, illustrations prepare the heart, and applications prepare the will (p. 86).

### E. The Attitudes

1. *A Divine Authority*  
When the preacher says what God's Word says, he has authority.
2. *A Biblical Manner*  
Evangelize, teach, clarify, and challenge
3. *A Humble Boldness*  
Be bold in the conveying of the Word of God, but remain humble, realizing that it is not your authority but God's.
4. *A Christ-Likeness*



### 3. THE PROCESS OF EXPLANATION

#### A. The Labyrinth

The Word of God is a maze to many people. It is the preacher's job to shed light in the right areas so the hearer can begin to understand the well-worn path which leads to understanding the text.

#### B. The Path of Preparation

##### 1. Six Critical Questions

1. What does the text mean?
2. How do I know what the text means?
3. What concerns caused the text to be written?
4. What do we share in common with:
  - a. Those to (or about) whom the text was written, and/or
  - b. The one by whom the text was written.
5. How should people now respond to the truths of the text?
6. What is the most effective way I can communicate the meaning of the text?

##### 2. Four Necessary Steps

###### a. Observe

"Get saturated with the Gospel. I always find that I can preach best when I can manage to lie soaked in my text. I like to get a text, and find out its meanings and bearings. Then, after I have bathed in it, I delight to lie down in it, and let it soak into me." - Spurgeon (103).

###### b. Interrogate

The question which must be asked is simply, "What's here?" This question leads to more penetrating questions.

"To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view... The opposite of exposition is 'imposition' which is to impose on the text what is not there." - John Stott (104)

##### 1. *Exegete the Passage (What Does It Say?)*

Exegesis is the process by which preachers discover the precise definitions and grammatical distinctions of the words in a text. This can and should be done in both the original language and a careful evaluation of the English versions.

##### 2. *Outline the Passage (How does it fit together?)*

Three types of outlines are suggested:

- Grammatical
- Mechanical
- Conceptual Outlines

##### 3. *Background the Text (Where does it fit?)*

c. *Relate*

This step seeks to determine how the passage will be and should be received by a given audience.

d. *Organize*

1. *Sequence and Order*

The text should be put into logical order. The exegetical outline is not usually the homiletical outline. The exegetical outline establishes what the text says. The homiletical outline establishes how the meaning is best communicated to the congregation.

2. *Exhaust and Cover*

The main points of the text should be reflected in the proposition and application of the sermon.

3. *Highlight and Subordinate*

The irrelevant must be discarded.

**C. The Light of Presentation**

The effective preacher needs to understand three basic steps for the actual presentation of the stated facts.

1. State and Place

First state what the text means. Then locate or place it in the text where the idea came from.

2. Prove

After stating the truth and properly placing it in the text, then it must be proven true to the hearer. This can be done with five methodologies:

- a. Restatement
- b. Narration
- c. Description and Definition
- d. Exegesis
- e. Argument

3. More Light

*Da lucem, Domine* – “Give light, O Lord!”

The fundamental obligation of an expositor: To state what you know and show how you know.

## **VII. SOME SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS**

### **1. Examine Key Words or Phrases in the Text.**

1. *Key Words*
2. *Repetition of Words or Phrases*
3. *Contrasts Between Words or Phrases*
4. *Comparisons Between Words, Ideas, or Phrases*
5. *Expressions of Time or Sequence*
6. *Terms of Conclusion, Transition, or Result*

2. Look for Themes that emerge as you read the text.
3. Investigate verb tenses in the original language. Track those verbs.
4. Watch for Questions asked and answers given in the text.
5. Look for warnings.
6. Watch for cause and effects relationships that may not be set off by a key word or phrase.
7. Look for promises (noting their general or specific nature).
8. Look for movement.
9. Watch for lists.
10. Look for explanations.
11. Look for commands.
12. Look for the important descriptions given by the text.
13. Watch for, and interpret carefully, figures of speech.

## CONCLUSION:

In his article, “Exegesis and Expository Preaching,” Robert Thomas reminds us that exegesis is the product of the skillful use of biblical languages in determining the original meaning of a given text.

### EIGHT THINGS ARE IMPORTANT:

1. The expositor must be a trained exegete with a “working” knowledge of the biblical languages.
2. Exegesis builds on sound hermeneutical principles or a systematic method for using them to analyze a text.
3. Investigation of the biblical introduction of the passage (book, chapter, and verses) to be used is foundational for a proper exegesis.
4. Exegesis includes a study of words, idioms, terms, phrases, and paragraphs. A study of their historical evolution, usage, and structure are critical to the exegetical process.
5. It includes an examination of the historical development of the book.
6. Expositors are to use the abundant resources available to them from scholars.
7. Preachers must speak on the level of the people. Technical data should not be used in the pulpit.
8. The meaning of the text must be communicated.

The exegete enhances his exegetical work by investigating other related fields of study.

Thomas lists four cognate areas of study:

- **Biblical and Systematic Theology** – One’s sermons must be based upon a biblically and theologically sound interpretation of Scripture.
- **Church History** - Sermons benefit from illustrations and lessons of the past.
- **Apologetics** - Apologetical methodologies of former Christians can be useful in devising current defenses of the faith. However, these defenses must emerge out of a sound interpretation of the Bible.
- **Applicational Ministries** - Here the Scriptures are applied to the human experience.
  1. *Homiletics* - sermon structure and its motivation are rooted in the text.
  2. *Counseling* - expository preaching is exhortation to groups as well as to individuals.
  3. *Christian Education* - the impartation of biblical truth emerges from the text also.
  4. *Missions and Evangelism* - the sermon's offer of salvation must be both mission and evangelistic oriented.
  5. *Social Issues* - Christians are responsible to help alleviate social ills and human need.

## **PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING**

**(Robert Thomas)**

1. Select what is most important about the text.
2. Use technical items when necessary, but sparingly.
3. Describe the writer's thoughts, aims, and purpose.
4. Show why you prefer a certain passage. Briefly, address any known difficulties.
5. Prepare a personal translation of the passage.
6. Remember you are servicing the mind as a groundwork for a service to the heart.
7. Follow the sequential flow of Scripture, but deviate from it when necessary.
8. Do not preach textual assumptions or idealistic assumptions about the text.
9. Select a proper translation on which to base a sermon.
10. Be yourself. Use your own gifts.
11. Know your audience. Challenge them with reachable possibilities.
12. Add something new to the known.
13. Cover a sufficient portion of Scripture. Do not try to preach it all at once.
14. Apply the text proportionately.
15. Teach the known as a point of reference, then move to the unknown.
16. Avoid sensationalism.

## WALT KAISER ON DOING EXEGESIS WITH INTEGRITY

*“The sole object of the expositor is to explain as clearly as possible what the writer meant when he wrote the text under examination.” (45)*

*“...preparation for preaching is always a movement which must begin with the text of Scripture and have as its goal the proclamation of that Word in such a way that it can be heard with all its poignancy and relevancy to the modern situation without dismissing one iota of its original normativeness.”(48) “Background studies about the author, culture, time, literary genre, and organizing principles of the Biblical book are exceedingly helpful and necessary as a proper preparation for approaching a Biblical text. But finally we must come to the text itself. It must consume the majority of our interest and attention. It must be to that text's phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and strophes that we devote our most detailed examination and searching analysis.” (50)*

*“Thus Biblical exegesis must use any and all of those tools which it legitimately can, while preserving the autonomy of the text and assuming its integrity.” (66)*

*“All sorts of “shortcuts” and “innovative ideas” are being introduced as substitutes for proclamation of the Word of God These substitutes include relational theology, transactional therapy, fellowship groups, “what-do-you-think” (pooled ignorance) Bible study groups, topical seminars, and just plain Christian entertainment in music, films, and variety programs. Some of these (in their most wholesome form) may have a function in the body of Christ, but never as substitutes of the declaration of the Word of God.” (202)*

## **SECTION 9**

### **The Exegetical/Interpretive Process: Guidelines, Principles and Aids**

# THE BASICS OF EXPOSITION THE EXEGETICAL PROCESS

John MacArthur has said,

“The proper elements in an expository sermon may be summed up as follows:

***Preaching is expository in purpose. It explains the text.***

***Preaching is logical in flow. It persuades the mind.***

***Preaching is doctrinal in content. It obligates the will.***

***Preaching is pastoral in concern. It feeds the soul.***

***Preaching is imaginative in pattern. It excites the emotion.***

***Preaching is relevant in application. It touches the life.***

The task of the expository preacher is to take the mass of raw data from the text and bridge the gap between exegesis and exposition.”

-(*Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, 289)

Explaining the text and examining the raw data involves exegesis. This in turn entails hermeneutics.

## Some Definitions of Key Terms Related to Hermeneutics and Exegesis

1. Hermeneutics: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.
2. Exegesis: The determination of the meaning of the biblical text in its historical and literary contexts (as opposed to *eisegesis* which is reading meaning into the text).
3. Exposition: The communication of the meaning of the text along with its relevance to present day hearers.
4. Homiletics: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a preaching situation.
5. Pedagogy: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a teaching situation.



## Luther and Calvin on Hermeneutics

“What I have advised elsewhere I here repeat and shall advise again: the Christian reader should devote his first effort to searching for what is called the literal sense.”

Martin Luther

“The literal sense of Scripture is the whole essence of faith and Christian theology. Every word should be allowed to stand in its natural meaning, and should not be abandoned unless faith forces us to it.”

Martin Luther

*Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*

(Scripture is its own interpreter.)

“That is the true method of interpretation which puts scripture along side of Scripture in a right and proper way.”

Martin Luther (Works, 3:334)

“It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.”

John Calvin  
(Preface to *Romans*)

“We must ever be on guard against wresting Scripture from its natural setting.”

John Calvin  
(*Psalms*, 2:388)

“Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions which lead us away from the natural meaning.”

John Calvin

## **MODERN HERMENEUTIC: A BRIEF SYNOPSIS**

- ❖ The Allegorical/Symbolic School (Idealism)  
Approaches the text looking for a deeper symbolic meaning. Looks beyond the surface narrative to a more spiritualized meaning. Very popular in the early centuries of the church when the Platonic worldview was dominant.
- ❖ The Literal/Historical/Grammatical School (Realism)  
Approaches the text assuming that the plain sense meaning is to be taken unless there are clues that symbolic language is being employed. Textual Criticism is employed to discover the original text. Takes narrative more seriously than the allegorical school.
- ❖ The Critical School (Naturalism)  
Approaches the text with naturalistic presuppositions, particularly about the method of inspiration. Expressions of the Critical Method include:
  - Form Criticism (Rudolf Bultmann) –  
Analyzes how the oral tradition/forms shape the literary form utilized by the biblical author as it impacts the text.
  - Source Criticism (Julius Wellhausen) –  
Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis found in the two creation narratives of Gen. 1 and 2 the clue to four sources for the Old Testament: J (Jahwist), E (Elohist), D (deuteronomic), and P (priestly). In New Testament studies, source criticism has focused on the Synoptic Problem and what written sources are behind our gospels (Q, M, L, Markan priority).
  - Redaction Criticism (Hans Conzelmann) –  
Attempts to discover the unique theology of each author.  
(Compare Matthew 8:14-15, Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38-39)
  - Structuralism (Ferdinand de Saussure) –  
Views language as synchronic and ahistorical. There are intrinsic structures in all languages which are not time-bound. The exegete should look for these intrinsic linguistic structures in the text.
  - Reader Response Criticism –  
Interpretation is a dynamic interaction between the text and personal application to the reader's situation. The reader determines meaning.
  - Deconstruction (Jacques Derrida, Mark Taylor) –  
Much more radical than reader response criticism. The text has no fixed meaning. The author is dead and the text relativized by the reader. There are as many meanings as there are readings.

❖ The Devotional School (Pragmatism)

Approaches the text with a view to finding not a timeless truth but a truth that works for me. The focus is on application, not authorial intent/textual meaning.

❖ The Existential School (Existentialism)

Approaches the text as that which prompts the reader to existential choice and an authentic life. Bultmann and Tillich sought to reinterpret the Bible in the light of Heidegger's existential categories. Popular existentialist simply posit their own subjective meaning onto the text.

**A COMPARISON OF HERMENEUTICAL PERSPECTIVES**

	<b>PRE-CRITICAL</b>	<b>MODERN</b>	<b>POST-MODERN</b>
<b>HERMENEUTIC</b>	Traditional dogmatic interpretation	Historical Critical method	Reader Response criticism
<b>PHILOSOPHICAL ONTOLOGY</b>	Platonism and Aristotelianism	Enlightenment rationalism	Existentialism and Pragmatism
<b>EPISTEMOLOGY</b>	Fideism	Rationalism, Foundationalism	Subjectivity, Antifoundationalism
<b>HERMENEUTICAL FOCUS</b>	Church doctrine	Reason, historical criticism	The reader
<b>ROLE OF TEXT</b>	The text is inviolable; seek to understand authorial intent	Use reason to determine the cultural and historical forces which shaped the author and text	The text has no closure; it is incomplete without the reader's response
<b>ROLE OF READER</b>	To understand and accept the author's intended meaning	To investigate the background and presuppositions of the author	To interact with the text pursuing one's own perspective
<b>HERMENEUTICAL EXPRESSIONS</b>	Traditional, plain sense interpretations	Source, form, and redaction criticism	Post-structuralism, reader response, deconstruction

## A MODERNIST CHALLENGE

The definition of the meaning of a text changed dramatically in 1946 with the announcement that it is a fallacy to depend on what an author meant to say as a guide to determining what a text means. Since that time, three figures have tended to dominate the continuing refinements or protests to this announced fallacy: Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and E.D. Hirsch. Gadamer stressed a "fusion of horizons" (almost in a recasting of the Hegelian dialectic in new terms), Ricoeur envisaged a whole new set of operations when communication is written down, while Hirsch claims it was impossible to validate meaning if it was not connected with the author's truth-assertions and distinguished from significances [applications] of a text.

At present there are four main models for understanding the Bible: 1) the proof-text method, 2) the historical-critical method, 3) the reader-response method, and 4) the syntactical-theological method. The first is often naive, the second has been judged sterile, the third is often reactionary to the second, but the fourth is holistic and involves both historical and practical applications. Amid all this dramatic change, we have come to realize that the word "meaning" is currently used to include the referent, the sense, the author's intention, the significance a passage has, its value, and its entailment. Hermeneutics has become a multifaceted discipline. Here, we give our attention to only one aspect, the most basic and fundamental.

## A Guide to the Exegetical Process

### Introduction:

- I. Spiritual Qualifications of an Interpreter of Holy Scripture
  - A. Born again (John 3; I Cor. 2:14-16). You cannot truly understand the Bible without the new birth. Unbelievers may achieve some degree of knowledge and appreciation of the text (see Stein), but they cannot embrace it in all its fullness without the new birth and the illumination of the Spirit.
  - B. Passion to know and obey God's Word (James 1:22-25)
  - C. Deep respect and reverence for God and His holiness (I Peter 1:13-16)
  - D. Complete and utter dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct (John 14:25). "To pray well is to study well."

- E. A total confidence in the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God (Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:21)
- II. The Perspective of the Interpreter
  - A. The question of critical methods

Summary: Never let any commentary or interpreter place himself in judgment above the Word of God; watch critical interpreters who correct the biblical authors as though they had a superior vantage point and ability. The Revelation of God is superior to the reason, experience, and the traditions of man.
  - B. The need for interpretive tools--pitfalls of neglect:
    1. A veiled egotism – “I don’t need the help of more than 2000 years of spiritual insight, scholarship or interpretation.”
    2. The danger of confusing biblical inspiration with biblical illumination.
    3. A caution about interpretive tools; never let them replace your work in the Scripture.

### III. The Exegetical Process

The exegetical process consists of several steps. These steps may overlap, but it is important to examine them one at a time. Followed consistently, these steps will become good habit. The habit will improve the quality of your studying and teaching by increasing the thoroughness of your study. It will also help you be diligent in the study of God's Word on days when you feel like doing something else (or nothing at all!). Furthermore, the steps break the process into manageable pieces.

### Step 1: Selecting a Text

- I. Choose a complete text (not a fragment to be used out of its context). Of course working straight through a book of the Bible will greatly assist you here. Paragraph preaching is an excellent model to follow.
- II. Select a genuine, properly translated text. See step 3 below.
- III. Approach the text with a mind that is willing to be stretched and taught by the text.

### Step 2: Determining the Limits of the Text

- I. The Aim
  - A. Seek to identify where a passage of Scripture begins and ends. Look for a complete unit of thought (paragraph or pericope). Remember that chapter and verse divisions are relatively recent additions to the Bible. The original manuscripts had no such divisions. Sometimes they fit, but on some occasions they do not.
  - B. Try to find the natural breaks in the text (seams). Discourse analysis and strategies are especially helpful at this point.
- II. The Procedure
  - A. Check the paragraphing indicated in the Hebrew and Greek texts (if you can!) and in English translations using paragraphing. The New American Standard Bible, for example, indicates a new paragraph by boldfacing the verse number of the first letter in the new paragraph. The NIV and NKJV also do this.
  - B. Consider how what goes before and after your text (context) influences the interpretation of the text. Would broadening the scope of your text by a verse or two in either direction alter your understanding of the text?
  - C. Look for literary clues: introductory statements; indications of time, place, or location; and concluding summary statements. These elements often mark beginnings and endings of units of thought.
  - D. Look for thematic elements that hold a passage together and set it off from surrounding verses. Reoccurring phrases or words are a valuable clue.
  - E. Consider the way commentators arrange the text into sections.

### Step 3: Exploring the Text

- I. Read the passage repeatedly from one of the more literal English translations: the New American Standard is the best option available today. If you have the ability, you should read directly from the original languages. Note any significant differences in translation for future investigation.
- II. Read the passage aloud several times. This will assist you also for the public reading of the word in worship.
- III. As you do these first several readings, jot down quickly whatever observations, questions, initial impressions, and related thoughts come to mind. Do not worry about evaluating them now. Just record them. Think, feels, and imagine. Ask God to speak to you personally from the text. Do not bring in commentaries and reference books just yet unless you hit a wall. Let them wait until after you have spent considerable time exploring the passage yourself.

### Step 4: Establishing the Text (Textual Criticism)

- I. Definition – “The procedure of checking for any variant or alternative words or phrases in the text and determining which reading is the original.” This does not refer to differences in translation: it refers to questions about the actual wording of the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts. This is an issue of the transmission of the text not the inspiration of the text!
- II. Why Establish the Text
  - A. It shows respect for the Bible by seeking to be true to exactly what God inspired and the author wrote.
  - B. It promotes a habit of honesty in handling the Scriptures, helping you learn to resist the temptation that whispers, “But the people I teach would never know the difference.”
  - C. It affects what you believe and thus what you teach.
  - D. People you teach have study Bibles that point out textual variations. Some will have legitimate questions that need answering.
  - E. It increases your confidence and your effectiveness as a preacher/teacher because you know you are prepared. You need not dread having someone ask a question that will expose the shortcuts of your preparation.

### Step 5: Studying the Text in Its Contexts

It is at this point that it is helpful to turn to reference books and commentaries. It is important to delay using these works until you have done your own research and had time to think

about the passage for yourself. Having done that, it is valuable to compare your first impressions with the conclusions of devout scholars who have given the passage a lifetime of study.

At this stage you may possibly adjust (or reject!) some of what you wrote during the first reading of the text. That is to be expected. What remains may well be valuable material when it comes to teaching. Your first impression may give you a good idea about the first impressions your hearers will have when they hear the text read. Often the things about the passage that intrigued you will make effective teaching introductions. But you will want to be sure that your interpretation squares with the findings of reliable interpreters. If you were the only person to interpret and understand a text in a particular way you may be right, but you are probably not! Your search will cover several areas.

## I. Historical Context

### A. Information Sought

1. Identity of the author
2. Date and place in which the book originated
3. Identity any circumstances of the recipients
  - a. Identity
    - (1) Believers or unbelievers
    - (2) Ethnic or religious background
  - b. Problems they faced
  - c. Their manner of life
    - (1) Social customs
    - (2) Material context
  - d. The relationship of author and recipients
  - e. Historical events of that time that have a bearing on the understanding of the passage
  - f. Geographical information

### B. Sources of Historical Information

1. Primary source - the Bible itself -- Sometimes this material is stated openly by the biblical writers. Read the beginning and ending portions of that book of the Bible to see if there are statements given about the author, recipients, date, or circumstances. In other cases the information can be gleaned from something elsewhere in the Bible.
2. Secondary sources of information -- Often we find help from extrabiblical sources. In still other cases the best that can be done is to make an educated guess. Recommendations from faculty members teaching in the departments of biblical backgrounds, Old Testament, and New Testament are the best guide to secondary sources of information about the historical context. Be careful to note a scholar's background and theological perspective (Conservative vs. Liberal). The following list will offer an idea of the types of reference books which are helpful.



- a. Bible Dictionaries - definitions of biblical terms, brief biographies of biblical characters, information about people and places, etc.

Example: *Harper's Bible Dictionary*  
*\*Holman Bible Dictionary*  
*New Bible Dictionary*  
*New International Dictionary of the Bible*  
*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*

- b. Bible Encyclopedias - more extensive coverage of subjects than that which is found in Bible Dictionaries, plus articles about theological subjects.

Example: *International Bible Standard Encyclopedia*  
*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*  
*\*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*

- c. Bible Atlases - maps, plus information about geography, topography, climate, etc.

Example: *Macmillan Bible Atlas*  
*Oxford Bible Atlas*  
*Harper Atlas of the Bible*

- d. Old Testament and New Testament Introductions

Use your textbooks or consult textbook lists for current recommendations by faculty members in Old and New Testament departments. See Akin's *Building A Theological Library*.

- e. Bible Commentaries

(1) Types as to Arrangement

- (a) One-volume commentaries on the whole Bible, though useful in some respects, are not detailed enough to be fully adequate in the kind of careful study done in sermon preparation. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* with a volume on the OT and a volume on the NT is the best available in my judgement.
- (b) Individual commentaries on one or more books of the Bible are excellent sources of information. The key question is knowing who the writer is, whether his expertise covers this particular part of the Bible, and the theological perspective from which he writes.
- (c) Sets of commentaries in which each volume covers one or more books of the Bible generally have a common format and usually reflect a common perspective, either denominational or theological. The quality of the commentaries often varies considerably from volume to volume, depending on the ability of the author of that particular volume of the set.

## (2) Types as to Aim

Commentaries are as unique as the authors who write them. Even within a series they will vary somewhat in emphasis. Yet they can generally be divided into three classes. It is likely that some people would place a given series in a different category. But to give some guidance, the following list is offered:

- (a) Devotional/Sermonic commentaries emphasize the relationship of the passage to modern hearers. Often the volume is the outgrowth of a sermon series. Usually they are written for laymen, pastors (sometimes without theological training), and others who are more concerned with the significance of the passage for today than with the historical, linguistic, and grammatical details of the passage. They may help preachers and teachers see how to apply the Bible to modern life.

Examples:     \*Be Series (Warren Wiersbe)  
                  *Communicator's Commentary*  
                  *Daily Devotional Bible Commentary*  
                  Exploring Series (John Philips)  
                  *Interpretation series*  
                  \**Preaching the Word* (Kent Hughes)  
                  *Pulpit Commentary*  
                  *Proclamation series*  
                  *Speaker's Bible*

- (b) Exegetical Commentaries are written for the pastor with seminary training and for other well-informed readers. They are more detailed in their analysis of the passage's original meaning and they focus less on its contemporary application. They are scholarly, but not written exclusively for scholars. These are an important part of the pastor's library.

Examples:     *The Bible Speaks Today*  
                  \**Expositor's Bible Commentary* (EBC)  
                  *Harper's New Testament Commentary*  
                  \**New American Commentary*  
                  *New Century Bible Commentary*  
                  \**New International Commentary on the N.T.* (NICNT)  
                  \**New International Commentary on the O.T.* (NICOT)  
                  *Old Testament Library*  
                  \**Tyndale Commentaries*  
                  *Word Biblical Commentary*

- (c) Technical Commentaries assume an audience with considerable theological background, including a healthy knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. They focus on some of the finer points of interpretation and usually deal with matters of history, linguistics, theology, and grammar and syntax more completely. They often are a source of information not found in other commentaries.

Examples:     Augsburg series of commentaries  
                  *Hermeneia Commentary*  
                  \**International Critical Commentary*  
                  \**New International Greek Testament Commentary*

(3) Selecting Commentaries. This is a highly individual matter, depending on your skill with Hebrew and Greek and your familiarity with the Bible. Once again the recommendations of faculty members in the Old and New Testament departments are invaluable.

Daniel Akin's *Building a Theological Library* is a helpful tool in making commentary selections. Other similar books are also available. Remember that some very fine commentaries on individual books of the Bible are not part of any commentary set. If you use only sets, you will miss some treasures.

You will want to work with the exegetical and technical commentaries. Avoid the exclusive use of the devotional/sermonic commentaries. Otherwise you may be tempted to take their sermonic treatment for your own and you may not deal as accurately with the text as you ought. That would rob you of the joy of formulating your own message. Additionally, the focus of the exegetical process is determining what the author intended to say to the original hearers. The text's significance for today is not the primary aim of this stage of the process.

## II. Literary Context

A. Genre identification (see Fee and Stuart, *How to Study the Bible for All Its Worth* for an excellent discussion of the literary genre of Scripture and the unique hermeneutical questions relating to the different genre).

1. Identifies the literary form or method used in a given passage. Is the passage a historical narrative? A parable? A prophecy? Poetry? An epistle? An apocalypse?
2. Determining the type of literature being studied helps you know whether to take language in the passage as figurative or in a more straightforward sense. It also can help you see how verses relate to one another.

B. The purpose of the book

Sometimes this is explicitly stated, as in Luke 1:1-4 and John 20:31. More often the purpose is discerned by reading the whole book and noticing recurring themes and emphases. Outlining the book of the Bible being studied is often helpful in seeing the purpose of the book. The outline need not be excessively detailed: as a beginning point, see if you can summarize in a complete sentence each chapter, then each paragraph.

C. The author's method of presenting the material

1. Usually the sequence in which materials are presented is significant.
2. Sometimes the author speaks directly; sometimes the message comes indirectly, between the lines.
3. Sentence flow diagrams of didactic passages are excellent helps in this regard. They give a visual depiction of the flow of the passage, showing how ideas relate to one another. Narrative texts can be "plotted"; describe the scenes, action, characters, climax, etc.

D. The relationship of the text to the overall flow of the book.

1. Some books of the Bible are tightly woven arguments in which every paragraph has a clear function.
2. Narrative portions of the Bible often have an essential unity that gives each section a clear reason for being there.
3. Some stories, especially in the Gospels, do not have as obvious a connection with their context. Yet even there it is wise to look and see if there is a connection. There probably is one.
4. The outline done previously is an excellent way of seeing how the passage being studied relates to the book as a whole.

### III. Linguistic Context

In this stage of studying the text, the point is to understand what the words mean as they work together to form sentences.

A. Lexical Study

1. Nature- It deals with the origin and development of word meanings. While origins of words are important--and often fascinating--what you want to know is what it meant the way this particular writer used it in this particular place. Beware of "exegetical fallacies!" (see D. A. Carson and his important work by the same title).
2. Need for lexicography- Most words which survive long in a language acquire denotations (specific meanings) and connotations (additional implications); these must be distinguished and defined.

### 3. Reference books for use in word study

#### a. Old Testament (Hebrew)

\*Brown, Driver, and Briggs (BDB), *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Ringgren, Helmer. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by John T. Willis. Grand Rapids:

Harris, R. Laird; Archer, Gleason; and Waltke, Bruce, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1980.

#### b. New Testament (Greek)

\*Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich and Danker (BAG), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.

\*Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78.

Earle, Ralph. *Word Meanings in the New Testament*. 6 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974.

\*Robertson, A.T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. 6 vols. Nashville: Sunday School Board of the SBC, 1930.

Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gergard, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-75.

“Little Kittel,” one volume work.

Vincent, Marvin. *New Testament Word Studies*. 4 vols. New York: Scribners, 1887-1900.

\*Vine, W.E. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. London: Oliphants, 1939-41.

Wuest, Kenneth. *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

### B. Grammatical and Syntactical Study

1. Nature - Grammar and syntax deal with the way words, phrases, sentences and even paragraphs work together to convey meaning. “Syntax” is derived from two Greek words, “syn” (with) and “tassein” (to put in order). Therefore, “syntax” means “to put together in order.” Syntax is the study of sentence structure, the arrangement of word forms to show their mutual relationships in the sentence.

#### a. Two kinds of syntax:

(1) Analytic: word order as guide (English)

(2) Synthetic: word-endings or case endings as guide (Greek)

#### b. Importance

(1) Martin Luther: “at its root, theology is grammar”

(2) Hebrew Example: Genesis 3:12

(a) Translation: the woman / the man / and he said / with me / you gave / whom / the tree from / to me she gave / she / and I / ate: “And he said the man the woman, whom you gave to me, she gave to me from the tree and I ate.”

(b) Significance: use of the personal pronoun “she”, subjective case, before verb, places focus not on the action but on the person performing the action; thus Adam is directly and emphatically blaming Eve for his action.

(3) Greek Examples:

(a) 1 John 3:9 – “does not commit sin” = “does not continue in the habit or pattern of sin”

(b) Matt. 28:19 – “go into all nations” = “as you are going into all nations”

#### Step 6: Gleaning the Theological Context of the Text

##### I. Get the Big Picture of the Passage as a Whole.

At this point in your study of the passage, you are moving from the details of grammar and syntax to see the big picture and understand what the passage as a whole is affirming. Exegesis is incomplete until the parts are properly put together, reassembled. Understood in context, the words and phrases have a theological message.

##### II. Understand How the Author’s Message Flows.

Identify the key affirmations of the passage. Note how the writer supports those affirmations with evidence and arguments. Write a paraphrase of the passage, trying to capture the essence of the passage in modern terminology. Then expand the paraphrase by elaborating on the various ideas involved.

##### III. Identify The Key Theological Statements and Related Implications.

Determine what the passage has to say about God and His nature, what it indicates about humankind, what it indicates about Christ, the gospel, the nature and mission of the church, last things, etc. You may discover yourself answering some of the questions you asked in the initial reading of the passage.

##### IV. Compare Scripture With Scripture - Theological Principle of the Analogy of Faith

A. Definition: Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture, viewing the Bible as a whole.

1. Presuppositions:
  - a. The Bible is unified, as God is a unity
  - b. The Bible is coherent: there are no contradiction between Paul and James, for example (Eph. 2:8-10 and James 2:14-26)
  - c. The Bible is inspired, of divine origin and therefore infallible and inerrant
  - d. The whole Bible is profitable for edification
  - e. The whole Bible is completely true and trustworthy
2. General Principles:
  - a. Obscure passages give way to clear
  - b. No major doctrine should be based on one verse or a few miscellaneous verses--(ex. the time of the rapture should not be a test of orthodoxy)
  - c. Points of doctrine not settled by specific reference may be settled by the general tenor of Scripture
  - d. Doctrines are more secure as they are taught in many verses and various parts of Scripture
  - e. If two biblical doctrines humanly appear to be in contradiction, (like human freedom/predestination) we must accept both (antinomy or compatibilism).
  - f. Passages which are brief should be studied in light of passages of greater length  
- Acts 2:38 in light of Romans 3:21-8:39
3. Specific Principles:
  - a. NT is the norm for interpreting OT
    - (1) OT moral laws should still be followed (Matt. 5:17-48)
    - (2) Dietary laws are rejected (Acts 15 council)
    - (3) Some civil laws are rejected or reinterpreted (ex.. an eye-for-eye)
    - \*(4) OT is promise, NT is fulfillment
  - a. First three gospels and historical portions of Acts should be interpreted in light of the Epistles
4. Priority of systematic passages over incidental; when purpose of passage is to teach a doctrine, it should take precedence over incidental allusions.
  - a. 1 Cor. 15:29-30 baptism for the dead is not mentioned anywhere else; but cf. The elaborate Mormon system build on this one text.
  - b. 1 Peter 3:19, "preach to those imprisoned," must consider Hebrews 9:27, "it is appointed unto all men once to die, then the judgment."
5. Seek universal principles in the midst of local ceremonies.
6. Teaching passages are helpful for the meaning of symbolic passages.

7. Each part of the Bible should be seen in light of its overall emphasis: God's glory and the salvation of man.

#### Step 7: Contextualizing (Applying) the Text

- I. Identify cultural elements present in the text.
- II. Evaluate cultural elements in the text as to their influence on the theology and ethics of the passage.
- III. Use principles of contextualization to determine the application of the text to modern recipients. The teaching may transfer directly or may require adaption of some sort. Specify which and why.
- IV. Specify culturally-relevant beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that should flow from the teaching of the passage.

#### A Brief Word on Principles For Interpreting Prophecy

1. Follow the normal hermeneutic of historical-grammatical-rhetorical interpretation. The historical element means that the cultural background and circumstances of the prophets are considered. The grammatical element means (a) that words are taken in their normal sense unless it is evident that a figure of speech or symbol is used, and (b) that words are considered in the light of their immediate and broad context. The rhetorical element considers the special features of apocalyptic and prophetic genres and considers the place of figurative and symbolic language.
2. Compare parallel passages, and fit all prophetic passages together in a unified whole. An understanding of the Book of Revelation, for example, is aided by an understanding of the Books of Daniel and Ezekiel.
3. Recognize the principle of "foreshortening: or perspective, in which events separated by many years are sometimes seen together (e.g., Is. 9: 6-8; 61: 1-2).
4. Recognize the several themes of both fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy.
5. Follow consistency in interpreting prophecy.
6. Determine if the predictions are conditional or unconditional.
7. Determine if the predictions are fulfilled or unfulfilled.

Adapted from notes by Dr. Roy B. Zuck of  
Dallas Seminary



## **SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERPRETING THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE (A Second Summation)**

### **I. Study the book as a whole.**

1. Consider the questions of date, authorship, recipients, and purpose (general matters of introduction).
2. Develop an outline of the entire book (study Bibles and commentaries will be helpful).
3. Examine the relationship of the passage under consideration to the book as a whole.

### **II. Establish the best textual base possible.**

1. Use the original language if you can.
2. Compare various versions and translations.

### **III. Investigate the text linguistically (e.g., word by word).**

1. Make a lexical (definitional) study of crucial words.
2. Research the passage for key words, phrases and ideas.
3. Track the verbs!

### **IV. Examine the form or forms of the material in the passage.**

1. What is the literary type (history, poetry, prophetic, apocalyptic)?
2. Is there any indication of the life situation from which the material came?

### **V. Analyze the structure of the passage.**

1. Determine if the material constitutes a literary unity.
2. Is there a logical sequence of ideas present?
3. Outline the passage you are studying.
4. Use the outline as the framework for your teaching.

**SEVEN STEPS TO STUDYING AND PREACHING/TEACHING  
THE BIBLE  
(A Summation)**

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Observation    | What do I see?  |
| 2. Interpretation | What does it mean?  |
| 3. Correlation    | How does it fit together?   |
| 4. Application    | How do I put this into practice?  |
| 5. Illustration   | How has this principle worked in other areas and in other people's lives? |
| 6. Proclamation   | How do I communicate this truth to others?                                |
| 7. Motivation     | How do I encourage others to love God by obeying God?                     |

## Appendix I

### **QUESTIONS TO AID TEXT INTERPRETATION**

by James Cox (Sr. Prof. of Preaching, Southern Seminary)

1. What is the text about?
2. What does the text mean to you?
3. What crucial exegetical issues in the text might bear on a correct interpretation?
4. What is the significance of the text in relation to Jesus Christ and the history of redemption?
5. What has the text meant to other interpreters?
6. What is the point of immediacy? Where does the text strike closest home in your own life?
7. What is there in the text that would make it difficult to communicate?
8. Can the truth in the text stand alone, or does it need to be seen in relation to a counterbalancing truth?
9. What are some of the causes of the condition or situation discussed or suggested in the text?
10. What are the theological implications or practical duties that grow out of the truth of the text?
11. What objections may be raised to your conclusions about the implications and applications of the truth of the text?
12. What would be the results of knowing or failing to know, believing or failing to believe, or doing or failing to do what the text suggests?
13. What must you do to make the message of the text real and true in your own life?
14. What is there in general literature, in biblical resources, in personal counseling, and in personal observation and experience that will exemplify or illustrate the truth of the text?

-(*Preaching*, by James W. Cox, pages 73-76)

## **“GETTING THE GOLD OUT OF THE ORE”**

### ***How to Study the Bible to Preach effectively***

by Joel Gregory (former Professor of Preaching, SWBTS)

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The contemporary preacher finds it essential to discover a secure, repeatable, practical way for finding, studying and preserving biblical material. The week-by-week challenge to find the text, research materials, understand and analyze the text so it can be explained and applied... is a major task. The key is learning how to “get the gold out of the ore.”

#### **HOW DO YOU GET AT THE TASK OF SERMON PREPARATION?**

##### **A. TWO APPROACHES MAY BE TAKEN.**

1. Begin with the congregation and their needs, problems, challenges, opportunities and difficulties... then move toward the text.
2. Begin with the text and move toward the contemporary needs of the congregation.

##### **B. REMEMBER THAT THE BIBLE BY DEFINITION IS RELEVANT TO EVERY HUMAN NEED, TEXT BY TEXT.**

##### **C. DESIGN A PLAN FOR YOUR PREACHING.**

1. A plan is necessary in order to be free in terms of study and preparation.
2. Set up a calendar, taking into consideration the needs of the church family (i.e. seasons, special occasions, church programs, holidays, promotions).
3. Select a text and sermon title for each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening message you plan to preach.

#### **SELECT A BIBLICAL TEXT FOR YOUR MESSAGE.**

##### **A. HOW MUCH TEXT IS A TEXT?**

1. Almost any amount of the Word of God can be used.

- a. Individual words - giving meaning, tense, mood, purpose and application.
- b. A phrase or part of a sentence.
- c. A biblical paragraph - including 3 to 5 or even 10 verses.
- d. A biblical chapter - covering all of it in a narrative style.
- e. An entire biblical book- using key words, catching major themes, setting the entire book out before the people.
2. Limit the sermon to the text, since “limitation” produces power in preaching.

## B. HOW DO YOU ANALYZE THE TEXT?

1. First, discover the three levels of context.
  - a. The immediate context - verses that precede and follow the text.
  - b. The book context - understand the place of the text in the whole of the book in which the text is set.
  - c. The canonical context - where the text fits in the whole broad sweep of the time-line of how God dealt with mankind in redemptive history.
2. Pay attention to the text before you try to interpret it.
3. Do what you can do through study and preparation, and God will do what only He can do when you stand to preach.

## COLLECTING, PRESERVING, EXPANDING, AND FILING YOUR STUDY NOTES.

### A. WRITE ONE VERSE AT THE TOP OF A PAGE.

1. Find out all you can about each word, phrase, and clause in that verse.
2. This procedure will allow you to make quick retrieval of the material as it relates to that text and passage.

### B. ADDITIONAL NOTES TO INCLUDE ON THE REFERENCE SHEET.

1. Write down you own best impressions, understanding and thoughts about the verse.
2. Turn next to comparative translations to make comparisons, contrasting the translations of the words, phrases and clauses in the text.
3. Review commentaries for analogy and validation from other students of the Bible.

**C. THREE LEVELS OF COMMENTARIES TO USE IN ANALYSIS OF THE VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY.**

1. “Heavy-weight” - analytical, critical or exegetical commentaries that address every word, phrase and clause, finding their root meaning, tense, mood, voice, etc.
2. “Mid-weight” - commentaries that look at a verse at a time, having digested the “heavy” commentaries and popularizing them. “Light-weight” popularized commentaries that comment in broad and sweeping examination of entire biblical chapters and books.

**D. GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT YOUR STUDY NOTES.**

1. Approximately one half of sermon preparation time should be spent researching the text and taking notes.
2. You should have 3 to 5 times more material than you will be able to use when preaching the message.
3. Speak out of the overflow of your study when you present the sermon.

**WHEN YOU GET READY TO SAY IT, WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?**

**A. YOU STAND ON THE RAZOR’S EDGE BETWEEN THE PAST BIBLICAL REVELATION AND THE PRESENT HUMAN SITUATION.**

1. Take your technical study and transfer it into the popular, contemporary street language of the people.
2. People need to know and want to know how God can relate to them in their lives.

**B. MOVING FROM THE TECHNICAL STUDY - WORD BY WORD – WITH DIRECT BIBLICAL AUTHORITY ENABLES YOU TO BRING THE MESSAGE OUT OF “THEN” INTO “NOW”.**

**CONCLUSION:**

Preaching begins with a plan of action, followed by word-by-word, verse-by-verse study of the text and its context. After translating this into the present idiom of the people, it is then related to every point of the message with direct biblical authority. The message becomes a means of communicating life-changing truth to the congregation.

## **SECTION 10**

**Correlation: How does it fit together?**

## **CORRELATION**

(How does it fit together?)

Because Scripture is the Word of God written in the words of men we operate from the premise that it is both unified and diversified. Because it is the Word of God, there is an expected unity and harmony to all its parts. Because it is the words of men, at least 40 authors writing over a 1500 year period, there is progression and variety. Putting all of this together presents a significant challenge to the expositor.

Theological exegesis is a badly missing element in much modern preaching. To overcome this weakness, preachers and teachers of the Word must discover and declare the theology which naturally arises from the exegetical study of the text. Several principles should guide us in our hermeneutical/homiletical process. These observations will tie together some of our previous discussion.

### **1. HONOR THE AUTHORIAL INTENT OF THE TEXT**

Walt Kaiser notes four ways to ascertain the intention of the writer:

- a) See if the writer himself clearly sets forth his purpose in the text (e.g., John 20:30-31)
- b) Study the parnetical sections in order to determine the author's own applications of his writing.
- c) Observe what details the author selected for inclusion and how he arranged them.
- d) When no other clues are available, the interpreter must develop his own purpose statement for the passage.

### **2. CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE CONTEXT**

Various connections between paragraphs and immediate context may include:

- a) **Historical** - connection of facts, events, or happenings in space and time.
- b) **Theological** - a doctrine may be dependent upon some historical fact and circumstance.
- c) **Logical** - a paragraph may connect with an argument or line of thought that is under development in the whole section.
- d) **Psychological** - something in the preceding line of reasoning may trigger a related idea.



Kaiser well notes,

“Good exegetical procedure dictates that the details be viewed in light of the total context. Unless the exegete knows where the thought of the text begins and how that pattern develops, all the intricate details may be of little or no worth.” (*Towards An Exegetical Theology*, 69)

“Only an awareness of and respect for the immediate context will keep the exegete from going off the deep end here. The author has the right to define his own words as he wishes to do so - and context is the key to unlocking part of that meaning.” (Ibid., 85)

“Any successful exegete must face the question of intentionality. We are most confident that the meaning of any given word (and therefore its text and context) will be discretely contained in a single intention of the author. If it is to be found anywhere else and extricated by some means other than the usual methods of exegesis, no one has yet spelled out how that process works or how we may authenticate the additional meanings at which that process arrives.” (Ibid., 113)

### **3. BE ALERT TO NARRATIVE AND COMPOSITIONAL PATTERNS IN THE TEXT.**

Walter Liefeld points to narrative and compositional patterns in the text that must guide our study of Scripture.

Such patterns serve at least three purposes:

- a) They draw the attention of the reader (especially of the Greek text) to conceptual relationships he or she might not otherwise have observed.
- b) They can provide a structure for a sermon outline.
- c) They contribute to the stylistic excellence of the work.

#### **A. NARRATIVE PATTERNS**

Various cultures have different ways of telling stories. We do need to be aware that there are certain conventions that are followed in narration.

These patterns are part of the inspired text. They help us understand the dynamics of the conversation and the theological and personal issues.

Work to identify with people, situations, and feelings of the text.

Haddon Robinson provides some additional assistance as we consider narrative text of Scripture.

He notes that a series of different questions must be raised when trying to understand a story. These include:

- a) Who are the characters in the story and why did the author include them?
- b) Do the characters contrast with one another?
- c) How do these characters develop as the story develops?
- d) What does the setting contribute to the story?
- e) What structure holds the story together and provides its unity?
- f) How do the individual episodes fit into the total framework?
- g) What conflicts develop and how are they resolved?
- h) Why did the writer bother telling the story?
- i) What ideas lie behind the story, implied but not stated?

## **B. COMPOSITIONAL PATTERNS**

These are patterns that lie more on the surface of the passage. They may occur in narrative or logical argument. Some are marked by specific words or constructions. Often these are marked by semantic patterns.

There are twelve kinds of patterns which are very useful to the expositor:

- a) ***Comparison or Contrast***  
Romans 5:12-19; Luke 7:36-50
- b) ***Repetition*** (a simple device, sometimes reflecting Semitic style) Matt. 5:3-11; Eph. 4 (one body and one spirit ... one hope ... one Lord, etc.)
- c) ***Continuity*** (passages that may, or may not, have a repeated phrase) Matt. 13:24-52; Luke 4:1-12
- d) ***Climax***  
Matt. 4; Luke 4 (Jesus' temptations); Eph. 3:14-21 (Paul's doxological climax)

- e) **Cruciality** (a point that is of extreme importance)  
Matt. 16:16 (Peter's confession); Rev. 11:15 (The eternal Kingdom and reign of Christ)
- f) **Interchange** (the alteration of person or subject)  
Luke 1:2 (the approaching birth of John, then of Jesus); Rom. 5:12-19 (interchange and contrast of Christ and Adam)
- g) **Particularization**  
Eph. 4; Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12 (gifts of the Spirit)
- h) **Generalization** (the reverse of particularization) Matt. 7:12 (the "Golden Rule")
- i) **Cause to Effect**  
Matt. 21:33-46 (parable of the tenants)
- j) **Substantiation** (providing the grounds or reason for something) Luke 12:13-34 (Jesus' teaching on 'possessions')
- k) **Radiation** (a central theme that radiates outward in various directions) Matt. 23 (Jesus' comments about the Pharisees)
- l) **Progression** (it is not easy to tell when an author is consciously using a progression of thought)  
Rom. 1:18-32 (degenerating activities of humankind)

Liefield notes that when we discipline ourselves to be alert for the twelve compositional patterns, we accomplish two things:

- a) We are likely to find a pattern that itself can form the basis of a sermon outline.
- b) We will follow closely the author's own direction of thought, rather than superimpose our own impressions.

#### **4. GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE PARTICULAR LITERARY FORM(S) UNDER CONSIDERATION.**

Five basic literary forms used by Biblical writers are:

1. ***Prose*** - the basic model of Biblical communication  
This includes: Descriptive Prose, Explanatory or Expository Prose, Emotive Prose, and Polemical Prose.  
Common features are Speeches; Records; and Historical Narratives.
2. ***Poetry*** - composes one-third of the OT
3. ***Historical Narrative***
4. ***Wisdom Writings***
5. ***Apocalyptic***
  - a) Rich symbolism involving heavenly and earthly creatures
  - b) Formalized phraseology indicating the revelation came by a vision or dream
  - c) Frequent conversations between the prophet and the heavenly being who discloses God's secrets to him
  - d) Cosmic catastrophes
  - e) The radical transformation of all nature and nations
  - f) The imminent end of the present age

#### **5. LOCATE THE "SEAMS" IN A TEXT WHICH WILL MARK OFF PARAGRAPH OR SECTION DIVISIONS.**

Seams will reveal themselves through:

- a) Repeated terms, phrases, clauses, or sentences
- b) Grammatical clues
- c) Rhetorical questions
- d) Change in time, location, or setting
- e) Vocative form of address showing shift of attention between groups
- f) Change in tense, mood, or aspect of the verb
- g) Repetition of the same key word, proposition, or concept
- h) A new theme

"The grand object of grammatical and historical interpretation is to ascertain the *usus loquendi*, that is, the specific usage of words as employed by an individual writer and/or as prevalent in a particular age. And the most fundamental principle in gramatico-historical exposition is that words and sentences can have only one signification in one and the same connection."

## 6. CAREFULLY DEFINE KEY WORDS

General principles for understanding word meaning include:

- a) The meaning of words is determined, in the first place, by custom and general usage current in the times when the author wrote them.
- b) In assigning meaning to a word, the exegete is on the most solid basis when the author himself has defined the term he uses.
- c) A word may be explained by the immediate attachment of a genitive phrase, an appositional phrase, or some other defining expression.
- d) The grammatical construction of a word may be another clue to its meaning.
- e) The meaning of some words may be determined by contextual antithesis and contrasts.
- f) In OT poetry, often one of the best ways to determine the meaning of a word is by means of Hebrew parallelism.
- g) A careful comparison of parallel passages may help an exegete define a word or phrase.

“Figures of speech can be a joy to the interpreter. But we must never label an expression as a figure of speech just to avoid difficulties. One has never settled an issue by proclaiming with a wave of the hand or shrug of the shoulder, ‘Oh, that is just figurative. We need not bother with it!’” –(Kaiser, 124-125).

“Words, then, are the basic building blocks for building meaning. We repeat, they must not be torn from their contexts. They will become untrustworthy guides if this happens. But when they are viewed and treated in their distinctive roles as part of the larger context, they serve the exegete well.” –(Ibid., 129)

## 7. GIVE DUE ATTENTION TO CULTURAL CONTEXT AND ITS CLUES

Kaiser provides exegetical principles for approaching cultural terms. These include:

- a) Those items that reflect the specific times, culture, and temporal forms in which the message was given should be identified.
- b) Where a distinction between cultural form and its content is to be made. The following guidelines can be used to distinguish timeless truth from that which is temporary and contingent.
  - The exegete must determine when the writer is merely describing something and setting a background for his abiding principle, and when he is prescribing something for his time and afterwards.
  - The exegete must determine whether the passage is inculcating a theological principle by means of a handy illustration from the culture of the day.
  - The exegete should ask himself whether the same theological principle may not be recognized just as fully today through an equivalent but not culturally identical medium.
  - There is something to be learned whenever Scripture itself, in a later historical situation, applies a different form or sanction to the same content.
- c) If a reason for a practice or for what might appear to a culturally-conditioned command is given and that reason is located in God's unchanging nature, then the command or practice is of permanent relevance for all believers in all ages.
- d) There are times when the principle of *ceteris paribus* ("other things being equal") may be attached to some of these commands.
- e) Special emphasis must be placed on the context every time the exegete meets what is suspected of being a strictly cultural item.
  - The use of explicit doctrinal and theological statements interspersed throughout a passage which treats some local or cultural problem indicates that serious teaching is involved even if the form of the custom is not always to be retained.
  - If the context rejects a practice or custom mentioned in the text being examined, we may be sure the practice or custom was never normative for believers.

- A more difficult decision is to be made when the immediate passage is not qualified by anything except an explanatory clause(s) or sentence(s) that follows it.
- Strict attention must be paid to the Bible's own definition of its terms as found in context.

“The historically or culturally conditioned nature of some of the Bible’s ethical demands or general teachings should not embarrass the interpreter. Particularity is often nothing more than a specific application or illustration within the universal to which it belongs. Thus the exegete may not, and in a fair number of cases should not, universalize or ‘principalize’ every injunction or description in Scripture.” - (Kaiser, 121)

## **8. ENGAGE IN THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

- A. Remember, “Scripture interprets Scripture.” It is its own best interpreter.
- B. Examine explicit theological affirmations found in the text.
- C. Compare with similar affirmations found in passages that have preceded the text under study.
- D. Study the clues to the antecedent theology within the text:
  1. The use of certain terms which have already acquired a special meaning in the history of salvation and have begun to take on a technical status;
  2. A direct reference or an indirect allusion to a previous event in the progress of revelation with a view to making a related theological statement;
  3. Direct or indirect citation of quotations so as to appropriate them for a similar theological point in the new situation;
  4. Reference to the covenant(s), its contents of accumulating promises, or its formulae.
- E. Consider again those key words that bear theological weight.
  1. Select those words which are significant.
    - It plays a key role in the passage.
    - It occurs frequently in previous contexts.
    - It is important in the history of salvation up to this point.

2. Define the word selected in terms of its function in the immediate context.
3. Examine the usages of the same word in other authors from the same period.
4. Use lexical tools to examine word roots and variations in meaning.
5. Consult an exhaustive concordance for the following:
  - The total number of times it appears in the Bible.
  - The period in which there is the highest concentration of usage.
  - Any limited context that exhibits an extraordinary number of usages.
  - Those contexts that illustrate its usage prior to the selected text being exegeted.
6. Consult various cognate languages to find additional usages, especially for words which occur infrequently in the Bible.

*“Simply to impose a theological grid on a text must be condemned as the mark of a foolish and lazy exegete. Further, the facile linking of assorted Biblical texts because of what appears on a prima facie reading to be similar wording or subject matter (usually called the proof-text method) must also be resisted since it fails to establish that all of the texts being grouped together do indeed share the same theological or factual content.”*

-(Kaiser, 134)

*“...the discipline of Biblical theology must be a twin of exegesis. Exegetical theology will remain incomplete and virtually barren in its results, as far as the church is concerned, without a proper input of ‘informing theology.’”*

-(Ibid, 139)



## **SECTION 11**

### **The Main Idea of the Text (MIT) and The Main Idea of the Message (MIM)**

## **THE MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT (MIT)/THE MAIN IDEA OF THE LESSON (MIM)**

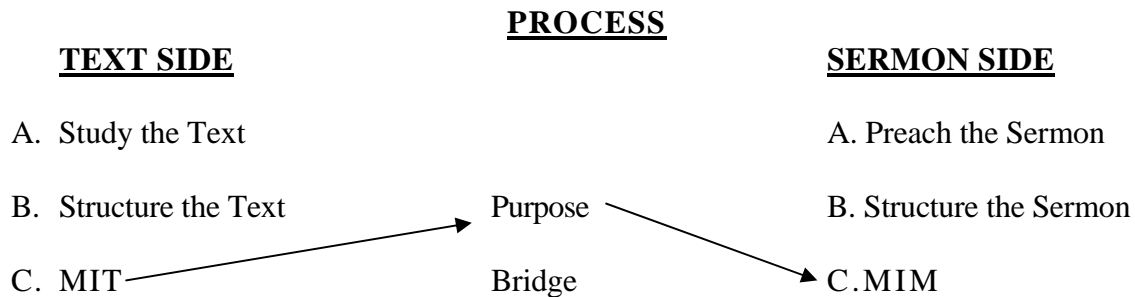
Every Bible teaching should focus on one main idea. If our people leave with one truth they have learned and intend to put into practice, we will have succeeded in our assignment.

Haddon Robinson challenges us to determine the “Big Idea” by asking:

1. What is the author talking about? - and –
2. What is he saying about what he is talking about?

Wayne McDill speaks of “Naming the Textual Idea.”

Ramesh Richard provides a method that balances the “text” and “sermon” aspects of homiletics. Central to his method is the parallel focus on the Central Proposition of the Text (CPT) and the Central Proposition of the Sermon (CPS). One (CPS) grows naturally out of the other (CPT) and insures that our work in the Scriptures and the Sermon will be true to the text. I have adjusted his terminology slightly.



## **I. THE MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT (MIT)**

### ***The “Heart” of the Passage***

At the heart of a paragraph should be one cardinal thought: the “main idea of the text” (MIT). This proposition is made up of two components: the theme and the thrust. The main idea is sometimes called by other names: “textual thrust,” “central idea,” “exclusive emphasis,” or the “big idea.”

### **Components of the Main Idea**

Theme (subject or topic)

Thrust (complement or assertions)

The main idea is the singular theme/thrust around which the details of the text are woven. Since we want to communicate one major point for the people to hear, understand, and obey, we seek to communicate the major idea of each Scripture text in contemporary terms.

Reduce your text to a simple proposition ... illustrating the main idea by the various terms in which it is contained. (Charles Simeon in John R. W. Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, 226)

### ***A. Identifying the Main Idea of the Text (MIT)***

The main idea of the text is the single unit of thought that binds together and gives meaning to all the particulars of a text. [In some manner it should relate to your title]

### ***B. What Does the MIT Look Like?***

It should always be in the form of a full grammatical sentence.

### ***C. What Does the MIT Contain?***

- The *theme* of the text: What is the author talking about in the text?
- The *thrust* of the text: What is the author saying about what he is talking about in the text?

#### ***D. From Where Does One Get the MIT?***

The MIT is derived from your structuring of the text. In order to get the main idea of the text, put the content of the subjects, themes, main points, or summaries together. In arriving at the MIT you are looking for accuracy and adequacy. The MIT must precisely reflect your particular text and must cover the assertions of the text.

##### *1) The Theme*

The theme of a paragraph should be specific. Grammatical or content cues will tell you which is the controlling theme-what the author is talking about.

##### *2) The Thrust*

What is the author saying about the theme?

#### ***E. Organizing Your Textual Work***

- Give a tentative title to the text. This could well be the “theme” of the MIT.
- If possible write a personal translation or paraphrase of the text reflecting the flow or argument of the text.
- Write out the main idea of the text. (Put the theme and thrust in full sentence form. The full statement does not need to be long, but make it adequate. You will refine it and shorten it as you work with it.)
- Write out the outline. (All points and sub-points should be in full sentence form.)

Here you are culminating the study process as far as the text itself is concerned. If you really desire to be an expositor of the Word of God, you will seek to impress on your people what the author stresses-the truth of his text. A good lesson, message or sermon should have a one-sentence statement that summarizes the passage being taught.

The task is not often easy, but if undertaken, pays rich rewards.

- The preacher/teacher avoids the often-heard criticism that expository sermons/teaching lack structure.
- The discipline gives the preacher/teacher a better understanding of the truths he will share with his people.
- It assists those hearing the message to understand the message.

Wayne McDill says a concept needs a name. Define the textual idea precisely in your own mind. Unless it is clearly defined by a careful choice of words, the idea remains vague.

Reflect what the biblical writer is saying. You want to see if what you are calling the subject is actually what the writer is talking about.

Give the textual idea an accurate name so that the same words can be used in the lesson or teaching. Unless we find the right words to identify the textual idea, how will we ever teach that idea?

Carefully identify all the theological themes in the text for insight into its main idea. You can usually recognize the theological themes in the text by looking at the significant words you see there.

Consider the plain and obvious meaning of the text for indications of the textual idea.

Look for a pivotal verse in the text which may contain the main theme. Though every text does not have a pivotal verse, many will. It will be the one verse which seems to summarize the meaning of the entire section.

## **II. The Purpose Bridge**

### ***The “Brain” of the Message***

When you cross this bridge, you will have gone from studying the Scriptures—a hermeneutical exercise—towards teaching the Scriptures—the homiletical exercise.

#### ***A. The Purpose of Purpose***

The purpose controls many aspects of lesson preparation and teaching. A valid and clear purpose of the lesson:

1. focuses the introduction of the lesson on the need that will be raised in the lesson;
2. determines what must be included and/or excluded in the body of the teaching;
3. influences the teaching’s conclusion and any application;
4. helps in choosing the illustrations that will help accomplish the purpose of the lesson;
5. provides a more objective way to measure the proficiency or success of the lesson;
6. but most important, the purpose of the teaching directly contributes to the form of the theme of the main idea of the message (MIM).

#### ***B. Determining the Purpose of the Message***

We find the purpose of the message (construct the purpose bridge) by asking and answering the following question: *On the basis of the main idea of this text, what does God want my people to understand and obey?*

#### ***C. Connecting the Purpose of Your Text and the Purpose of Your Lesson***

Answer two *compatibility questions*.

1. Can I make an exegetical or theological case that my lesson's purpose is compatible with the *purpose* of the text?
2. Can I make a sociological or psychological case that my lesson’s purpose is compatible with the *needs* of my audience? This question is clearly secondary, but it enables one to be relevant to the audience.

***D. The Purpose Bridge***

Number one issue: What are the needs and conditions of my audience?

You are both liberated and limited by the main idea of the text. You must identify the lesson's purpose and fine tune it to the audience to whom you minister.

Two purposes are legitimately drawn from most text. The first is content oriented; the second behavior oriented. Your purpose statement will almost always, in raw form, provide the *theme* of the central proposition of the lesson.

### III. The Main Idea of the Message (MIM) *The “Heart” of the Message*

Here the MIT is channeled through the purpose. It is then contemporized by the main idea of the message. The MIM takes you into the homiletical aspects of the lesson/sermon preparation process.

For the sermon, as a living word from God to his people, should make its impact on them then and there. They will not remember the details. We should not expect them to do so. But they should remember the dominant thought, because all the sermon’s details have been marshaled to help them grasp its message and feel its power.

John R. W. Stott,  
*I Believe in Preaching*, 225

The subject answers the question, What is the sermon about? ... Whether a sermon has two points or ten points, it must have one point, it must be about something.

John A. Broadus,  
*On the Preparation and Delivery of a Sermon*, 38

The first thing in making a sermon, the *sine qua non*, is the idea. There can be no sermon that was not first preceded by an idea or a theme.

John Killinger,  
*Fundamentals of Preaching*, 44

I have a conviction that no sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study.

J. H. Jowett,  
*The Preacher: His Life and World*, 133



Too many so-called expositors simply make the one central idea the substance of their message. The narrative may be read or retold, but the sermon is essentially their central expository idea-it is explained, illustrated, and applied without further recourse to the text. This approach is not valid exegetical exposition. In exegetical exposition, the substance of the exposition must be clearly derived from the text so that the central idea unfolds in the analysis of the passage and so that all parts of the passage may be interpreted to show their contribution to the theological idea.

Allen P. Ross,  
*Creation and Blessing*, 47

#### ***A. Coming Up with the MIM***

The teaching process is thoroughly integrated. Our study (step one) and structure (step two) influence the main idea of the text (step three). The MIT influences the purpose of the lesson (step four). From the purpose of the lesson, we have to articulate the main idea of the message (step five).

Just as the text has a singular theme/thrust, your teaching must have a singular theme/thrust as well. For the MIM, you ask the key questions, of yourself rather than of the biblical author.

#### **The Main Idea of the Message**

Theme:     What am I talking about?  
Thrust:     What am I saying about what I am talking about?

Guidelines for the

## **Message Idea**

### **(MIM)**

- Develop the MIM with your audience in mind.
- State the MIM in the most memorable sentence possible.
- State it positively, not negatively if possible.
- State it in the active voice, not the passive voice if possible.
- State it in words or phrases which are precise, concrete, and familiar to your listeners.
- State it so that the truth is readily seen as relevant to your audience and their needs.

## **Characteristics of the Main Idea of the Message**

### **(MIM)**

- It is derived from the main idea of the text.
- It is what the teacher is saying.
- It is a carefully worded statement.
- It is geared to the audience.
- It has a subject and a complement.
- It is a complete sentence.

## **SECTION 12**

### **Application**

## **APPLICATION**

### **SHOWING YOUR AUDIENCE HOW CHRISTIANITY WORKS**

“A teacher is a stimulator/motivator: a coach. A student is an investigator/discoverer: a player.”  
(Danny Akin)

“Without practical application, exposition is mere description. If exposition is explanation, expository preaching is explanation applied.” (Liefeld, p.6)

“We must constantly be asking ourselves not only what we are preaching, but why.” (Ibid, p.7)

“It is the personal concern that distinguishes the good pastor from the mere minister.” (Ibid, p.109)

“Solid biblical content can impart important new concepts and even plans of action, but yet fail to ‘speak to the heart,’ stir the hearers to appropriate the new concepts and take the proposed action.” (Ibid)

“...for expositional preaching to be fully effective in teaching the text, touching the heart, and transforming listeners, practical application must be considered a vital element in preparing expository sermons.” (Scott Blue, “The Necessity of Application in the Expository Sermon,” Unpublished paper, April 1999, SBTS, p.5)

“Biblical exposition without application leads to spiritual constipation.” (Ramesh Richard)

#### AS WE APPLY SCRIPTURE:

1. The mind must be educated (discernment)
  2. The heart must be motivated (desire)
  3. The will must be activated (decision)
- (Steven and David Olford)

“... a gap of crisis proportions exists between the steps generally outlined in most seminary or Biblical training classes in exegesis and the hard realities most pastors face... as they prepare their sermons. Nowhere in the total curriculum of theological studies has the student been more deserted and left to his own devices than in bridging the yawning chasm between understanding the content of Scripture as it was given in the past and proclaiming it with... relevance in the present.” (Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, p.18)

“[Application is] that process by which preachers make scriptural truths so pertinent to members of their congregations that they not only understand how those truths should effect changes in their lives but also feel obligated and perhaps even eager to implement those changes.” (Jay Adams, *Truth Applied*, 17)

“[Application answers] two questions: So what? and Now what? The first question asks, ‘Why is this passage important to me?’ The second asks, ‘What should I do about it today?’” (Daniel Veerman, “Sermons: Apply Within,” *Leadership*, Sept. 1990, 122)

“Application is more than just taking the sermon truth and attacking the congregation with it. Application presents the implications of biblical truth for the contemporary audience. It is a call for action, for putting the principles of Scripture to work in our lives. It deals with attitudes, behavior, speech, lifestyle, and personal identity. It appeals to conscience, to values, to conviction, to commitment to Christ.” (Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing, 1994], 187)

“What advantage would there be if we were to stay here half a day and I were to expound half a book without considering you or your profit and edification? ... We must take into consideration those persons to whom the teaching is addressed... For this reason let us note well that they who have this charge to teach, when they speak to a people, are to decide which teaching will be good and profitable so that they will be able to disseminate it faithfully and with discretion to the usefulness of everyone individually.” (John Calvin, quoted in Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Word*, 132-133)

“Contextualization can be defined as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of the Holy Scripture, and that it is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. Contextualization is both verbal and nonverbal and has to do with the theologizing, Bible translation, interpretation and application, incarnational lifestyle, evangelism, Christian instruction, church planting and growth, church organization, worship style - indeed with all those activities involved in carrying out the Great Commission.” (David J. Hesselgrave, “Contextualization that is Authentic and Relevant,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 12, July-August 1995, 115)

*“They may not care what became of the Hittites and the Jebusites; they want to know, “what will become of us?” (Charles Koller, p.77)*

*“[Preaching] is not completed until God's people think and act differently for having heard the Word expounded” (Timothy Warren, “A Paradigm for Preaching,” BibSac, Oct-Dec 1991, p.143)*

## I. DEFINING APPLICATION

“‘Application’ stems from two Latin words: *Ap*, meaning ‘to,’ and *plico*, meaning ‘to knit.’ Application developed into the idea of joining something in such a way as to change or effect that to which it was joined. Historically, two other terms were used to describe the act of applying Scripture:

*Improvements* - enabling a congregation to utilize God’s Word in their daily lives.

*Uses* - the practical implications of a biblical text, following the “Doctrines,” showing how the latter might impact everyday living.” -(Adams, *Truth Applied*, 15-16)

<u>RESOURCE</u> WORD OF GOD	<u>METHOD</u>	<u>RESULT</u> MAN OF GOD
<b>Belief</b>	Doctrine / Correction	
Given by God		Character: Who he is.
<b>Behavior</b>	Instruction / Reproof	
Inspired by God		Conduct: What he does.

SCOTT BLUE BELIEVES APPLICATION IN THE EXPOSITORY SERMON MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST 5 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:

1. Sermon application must be based on biblical truths gained by a historical grammatical-literary examination of the biblical text chosen for the expository sermon.

2. Sermon application should be related to the author's intended purpose for the text or a portion of the text.
3. Sermon application must relate why the biblical truths are relevant for the listeners in their contemporary lives.
4. Sermon application must include practical examples and suggestions of how listeners can adapt their lives to the biblical truths presented.
5. Sermon application must persuade listeners that they should adapt their lives to the biblical truths presented and encourage them to do so.

*From this Blue provides an excellent definition: "Application is the process whereby the expositor takes a biblical truth from his sermon and applies it to the contemporary context of his audience, prophetically relating why it is relevant for their lives, practically showing how it should affect their lives, and passionately encouraging them to make necessary changes in their lives." (p.9)*

RAMESH RICHARD SAYS BY THE END OF THE SERMON THE AUDIENCE MUST HAVE THE ANSWERS TO THREE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

1. What did the preacher speak about?
2. So what difference does or should it make?
3. Now what do I do with God's claims in this sermon?

## **II. THE STEPS TO APPLICATION**

(“Clothing Truth with Overalls”)  
(How can Biblical truth change my life?)

Application is always built on interpretation. If the interpretation is wrong, the application will be wrong. Caution! Never attempt to apply before observing and interpreting.

## **1. Be aware of the problems to application.**

- A. Some stop the hermeneutical process before it is complete! Howard Hendricks says, "Observation and Interpretation without Application is Abortion!"

***"Let the baby go full term."***

Remember: The Bible was not written to make us smarter sinners, but holy saints.

- B. We substitute knowledge for experience.  
Key question to ask: "Do I know a lot more, or do I live a lot better?" (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1)
- C. We like to apply to areas we already are working on and neglect new avenues of need.
- D. We rationalize the process to fit our present lifestyle.
- E. We allow an emotional experience to be substituted for a volitional decision.
- F. Pressures from society cause us to compromise what we know to be true.
- G. Our prejudice and spiritual truth come into conflict.  
"Most of us don't think; we just rearrange our prejudice."
- H. Ignorance.

WE SHOULD LOOK TO THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE OF THE TEXT, THEN TO OURSELVES, THEN ASK 4 KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How are we like them?
2. How are we unlike them?
3. How should we be like them?
4. How should we be unlike them?

## **2. Know the interpretation of the text bridging the hermeneutical horizons (gap).**

Beware of the error of the fork. To take the wrong path is to diverge more and more from the truth.

## **3. Know you applicational situation. Remember: the interpretation is one but the application is many.**

- A. Know yourself. (1 Tim. 4:16)
  1. Your strengths/assets. It will build confidence.
  2. Your weaknesses/inabilities. (Rom. 12:3) It will encourage humility and build faith.
- B. Know your people - age, background, individual needs, etc.



**4. State your application in the form of a universal principle.**

Ultimate principle to remember: the solution to your problem is a person (Jesus Christ).

- A. Be in line with the needs, interests, questions, and problems of today.  
This is the key to relevance.

**THERE ARE TWO HISTORIES AND YOU MUST BRIDGE THE HORIZONS:**

**ORIGINAL HISTORY**

**OUR HISTORY**

Colossae A.D.60-63

Truth revealed out of  
“the then”

**COLOSSIANS**

between two worlds  
Principle Bridges

Raleigh/Durham 2005

Truth reborn into  
“the now”

- B. Be in harmony with the general tenor of Scripture. The analogy of faith:  
Scripture will not contradict Scripture.

- C. Be specific enough to indicate a course of action. 13 Questions to ask:

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid/confess?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a condition to meet?
7. Is there a verse to memorize?
8. Is there an error to avoid?
9. Is there a challenge to face?
10. Is there a principle to apply?
11. Is there a habit to change - i.e. start or stop?
12. Is there an attitude to correct?
13. Is there a truth to believe?

**5. Saturate your mind in terms of relationships.**

Proposition: Christianity is best understood as a series of new relationships.

## APPLICATION

*A dynamic process of change  
changes*

### IN CHRIST

Education

Social

Business

Church

Values

Thought

Home Life

Sex

cf. 2 Cor. 5:17

*Jesus invades and*

*every area of our life.*

- A. Probe your passage with questions regarding the relationships of life.
- B. Take the leash off your mind and let it run freely. (See how many relationships can be affected by this truth.)
- C. Forget the critical. Examine every possible area even if it seems trivial.
- D. Plug into real life.
  - Be realistic - concentrate on the concrete vs. abstract thinking.
  - Think vicariously - see through the eyes of others.
  - Expose yourself to people and life.

## 6. Consciously Practice.

- A. Remember - you have not applied until you have practiced.
- B. There is great danger of trafficking in unlived truth. Vance Havner said, "What we live is what we believe. Everything else is just so much religious talk."
- C. The practice itself will be a commentary on your understanding of the truth.
- D. You cannot adequately apply to others what you have not applied to yourself.
- E. You cannot be diligently applying everything but you should be consciously applying something.

## TWO QUESTIONS:

1. What am I trusting God for right now?
2. What is my plan of action?

Fenelon said, "The essence of Christianity resides in the will."

Maturity is not a mechanical process of addition but a dynamic process of growing. One reason why people do not change is they have no plan of action.

**THINK IN TERMS OF:**

1. Interpretation
2. Practicality
3. Need - your objective and your audience

**IN SUMMATION** - How should my character, conduct, or conversation be effected by the Word of God?

**How should this truth affect my:**

- Attitudes - toward God, others, circumstances
- Knowledge of God
- Behavior - habits to develop, habits to change, habits to confirm
- Relationships - Where do I need to forgive, seek forgiveness, encourage, rebuke, submit, lead?
- Motives - Am I doing right for the wrong reasons?
- Values and Priorities - Who or what comes first? Who or what should?
- Character

Application requires a decision and a specific plan of action in order to allow the Holy Spirit to make scriptural principles part of us.

A word about habits: Here is where the "rubber meets the road." It takes about three months to change a habit and the enemy knows this very well. Be ready for conflict and failure mixed with success. The Lord has, however, predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, so ... keep plugging! (Rom. 8:28-30)

**IN BRINGING THE SCRIPTURES TO LIFE, VIEW YOUR LIFE AS A SERIES OF NEW RELATIONSHIPS:**

**A. WITH GOD**

1. A truth to understand
2. A command to obey
3. A prayer to express
4. A challenge to heed
5. A promise to claim
6. A fellowship to enjoy

## **B. WITH YOURSELF**

1. A thought or word to examine
2. An action to take
3. An example to follow
4. An error to avoid
5. An attitude to change or guard against
6. A priority to change
7. A goal to strive for
8. A personal value or standard to hold up
9. A sin to forsake

## **C. WITH OTHERS**

1. A witness to share
2. An encouragement to extend
3. A service to do
4. A forgiveness to ask
5. A fellowship to nurture
6. An exhortation to give
7. A burden to bear
8. A kindness to express
9. A hospitality to extend
10. An attitude to change or guard against
11. A sin to forsake

## **D. WITH SATAN**

1. A person to resist
2. A device to recognize
3. A temptation to resist
4. A sin to avoid and confess
5. A piece of spiritual armor to wear

-adapted from *Unlocking the Scriptures* by Hans Finzel

## **“THE PEOPLE I PREACH TO”**

1. Work life: how will this apply to:
  - Unemployed
  - steadily employed
  - retired
  - retiring
  - disabled
  - laid off or fired
  - own their own business
  - work for another person good or bad

2. Home life
  - a. How does this apply to marriage?
    1. the husband
    2. the wife
    3. newlyweds
    4. elderly in their golden years
  - b. How does this apply to the divorced?
    1. divorced recently
    2. divorced several times
    3. divorced because of adultery
    4. divorced and didn't want a divorce
    5. divorced with children
  - c. How does this apply to children and young people?
    1. abusive parents
    2. parents who aren't supportive
    3. fine Christian parents
    4. children in single parent homes
    5. kids whose parents are divorced or divorcing (How does this apply to parents raising children?)
      - (a) a wayward child
      - (b) compliant and obedient children
      - (c) a disrespectful young person
      - (d) a sick or terminally ill child
  - d. How does this apply to children with aging parents?
    1. parent with Alzheimer's disease
    2. parent grieving over the loss of their spouse
    3. parent living on a life support machine
    4. parent confined to a nursing home
    5. parent whom demands inordinate amount of attention from their children
  - e. How does this apply to the personal life?
    1. struggle against a besetting sin
    2. finances

3. career decisions
4. moral choices
5. setbacks
6. victory in an area of their life
- f. How does this apply to church life?
  1. pastor
  2. Sunday school teachers
  3. leadership
  4. inactive members
  5. disgruntled members
  6. relationships broken because of an offense
- g. How does this apply to friendships and relationships?
  1. neighbors
  2. recreational friends
    - (a) friends you fish with
    - (b) friends you shop with
    - (c) friends you share confidentially with
  3. casual acquaintances
    - (a) a workout partner
    - (b) waiter or server you see regularly

#### **IV. HADDON ROBINSON AND THE HERESY OF APPLICATION**

In the Fall of 1997, Haddon Robinson in *Leadership Magazine* (pgs. 21-27) spoke of the heresy that is often found in the application section of preaching. What follows is an outline synopsis of that interview:

- I. “MOST HERESY IS PREACHED IN APPLICATION THAN IN BIBLE EXEGESIS.”
  - A. Preachers want to be faithful to the text. While in seminary they learned exegesis but not how to make the journey from the biblical text to the modern world.
  - B. In order to make the jump from text to the world we have to deal with the preacher's question which is application. If we have used the wrong application then the heresy is a good truth applied in the wrong way.

## II. WHAT DOES HERESY LOOK LIKE?

Ex. To preach a sermon from Ruth about how to treat your in-laws. “that’s a rape of the Bible. Your saying what God doesn't say.” (p.22)

## III. What is the effect of this kind of preaching on one's congregation?

- A. You undermine what the Scripture is actually saying and you give people the idea anything with a biblical flavor is what God says.
- B. “The long term effect is that we preach mythology.” (p.22)

## IV. What makes Bible application so prone to error?

- A. Because we are taking the eternal truth of God given in a particular time, place and situation and trying to apply it to a modern world living in different context.

## V. What is the best way to avoid error?

- A. One way is to bring the text straight over to the modern situation. Ex. "Jesus says love your enemies, if you have enemies, love them."
- B. Some texts are not able to come directly over to the modern situation. In order to avoid this the preacher must understand both the circumstance of the text and the modern situation. For example, when Paul speaks about 1st century slavery he is referring to a much different institution than we know from the 19th century America.
- C. We must determine if the questions being answered are the ones we are asking.

## VI. How to know if we are confusing the questions?

- A. “A text cannot mean what it has not meant.” (p.23)
- B. “The Ladder of Abstraction” - Picture a ladder which comes up from the biblical world, and crosses over to the modern setting. Robinson says, “I want to make sure the biblical situation and the current situation are analogous at the points I am making them connect. The center of the analogy must connect not the extremes.” (p.23)
- C. Example - boiling a goat in its mother's milk is actually a prohibition about being involved in pagan practices. Climb the ladder until you reach the principle.

VII. How do you climb the ladder if the text cannot come straight over?

A. Abstract up to God. Find the vision of God in the passage.

B. Depravity Factor. What in humanity rebels against that vision of God? (p.24)

(Bryan Chapell calls this the Fallen Condition Focus [FCF].)

VIII. Does the Bible address every situation?

Not directly and we should acknowledge this.

IX. How do you apply Scripture to people with such varied backgrounds?

Make a grid of the people in your congregation. Find the principle of the passage and ask how it relates to each of the people on your grid.

X. What do you say when something is not a matter of obedience?

A. We can't always have a thus saith the Lord about everything so you have to distinguish between various types of implications.

1. Necessary implication - you shall not commit adultery.

2. Probable implication - Be careful about strong bonding friendships with the opposite sex.

3. Possible implication - Don't travel regularly [at all!] to conventions or other places with the opposite sex.

4. Impossible implication – Don't have dinner with another couple because you are at the same table with a person who is not your spouse. (pgs. 25-26)

B. "One way to phrase these distinctions in the pulpit is to say, 'This is the principle and the principle is clear. How it applies in our lives may differ with different people in various situations.'" (p. 26)

XI. How do different genres affect our application?

A. The most extensive Bible genre is story. But it's dangerous to go into a narrative and say, here are three things to learn about the providence of God.

To interpret the Word accurately you must consider the methods used to proclaim it.

B. The best way to handle the situation is to take the principle and apply it to the universal experience not the specific individual situation. (pgs. 26-27)

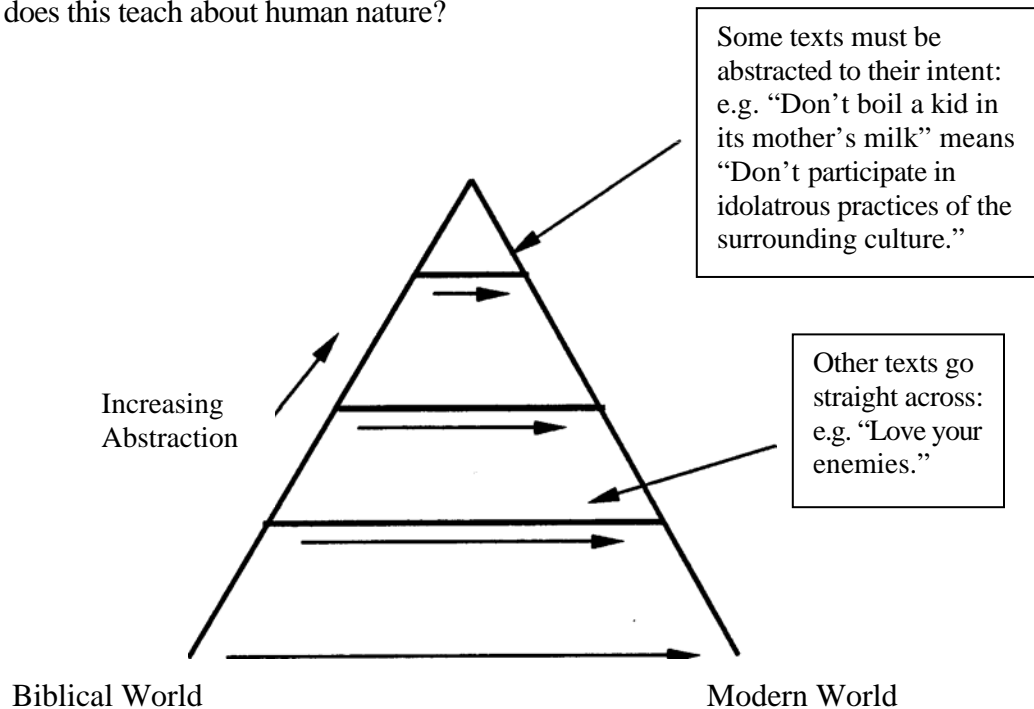


- XII. What is the best use of increased time in sermon preparation? Spend time on what you usually don't focus on.
- XIII. How does the Spirit apply the text to the listener's life?
- A. The Spirit answers to the Word. If I am faithful to the Scriptures the Spirit will honor that.
- B. Formula: Pain+Time+Insight=Change. Pain and time are not enough to change people but if you combine these with insight then you will create change. That insight comes from the Word of God.

### ABSTRACTION LADDER

Climb by asking:

1. What does this teach about God?
2. What does this teach about human nature?



## **V. BENEFITS OF APPLICATION**

1. Application fulfills the obligation of “purpose” in the sermon. Listeners are urged to move as a result of hearing the demands made upon them by the biblical truth presented to them in the sermon.
2. Application helps reach the whole person. It touches the will and moves toward intention.
3. Application develops Christ-likeness in the listeners.
4. Application develops moral discernment in an amoral environment.
5. Application allows hearers to grasp the biblical message as relevant to their contemporary needs.

“Good preaching begins in the Bible, but it doesn’t stay there. It visits the hospital and the college dorm, the factory and the farm, the kitchen and the office, the bedroom and the classroom. Good preaching invades the world in which people live, the real world of tragedy and triumph, loveliness and loneliness, broken hearts, broken homes, and amber waves of strain. Good preaching invades the real world, and it talks to real people - the high-school senior who’s there because he’s dragged there; the housewife who wants a divorce; the grandfather who mourns the irreversibility of time and lives with a frantic sense that almost all the sand in the hourglass has dropped; the farmer who is about to lose his farm, the banker who must take it from him; the teacher who has kept her lesbianism a secret all these years; the businessman for whom money has become a god; the single girl who hates herself because she’s fat. Good preaching helps them do business with God; it helps them interpret their own human experience, telling them what in their heart of hearts they already know, and are yearning to hear confirmed.” (Louis Lotz, “Good Preaching,” *Reformed Review* 40, Autumn 1986, 38)

## **“PREACHING WITH RELEVANCE”**

by Tim Schroeder, Senior Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Kelowna, BC and an auxiliary member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

### **I. THE REALITY GAP**

#### **A. Self test for measuring your reality gap:**

- Name 2 of the top 10 songs popular among youth. What are the messages of each?
- Name 2 of the top 10 videos being rented. What are the themes?
- What are the various buzz words being used by various age groups in your audience?
- What are the 5 hottest television programs and what are their main topics?
- What one social problem impacts your city most?
- How long has it been since you've heard someone swear in your office without apologizing?
- Do you know what is being discussed in your city?

#### **B. There's a gap between what the preacher perceives as reality and what the hearers experience.**

#### **C. The people in the pews have the most at stake when the preacher enters the pulpit.**

#### **D. 60% of Americans feel the church is irrelevant.**

#### **E. We don't know what's going on in people's lives.**

### **II. ACTION STEPS**

#### **A. Stay current with information common to your audience.**

#### **B. Identify and use the resources that you already have.**

#### **C. Recruit your congregation to help you preach.**

#### **D. Use your natural interests and abilities.**

#### **E. Cultivate relationships with non-Christians.**

**CONCLUSION:** Having stepped into the real world, a new level of consciousness is present when we step into the pulpit.

# **AN ILLUSTRATION OF PERSONAL APPLICATION THROUGH FIVE HYPOTHETICAL OUTLINES**

(by Walter Liefeld)

**The subject matter: God as light, Savior, and refuge.**

## **Type One: Description**

1. The Lord, our Light
2. The Lord, our Salvation
3. The Lord, our Refuge

## **Type Two: Declaration**

1. The Lord is our Light
2. The Lord is our Salvation
3. The Lord is our Refuge.

## **Type Three: Explanation**

1. What does it mean that the Lord is our Light?
2. What does it mean that the Lord is our Salvation?
3. What does it mean that the Lord is our Refuge?

## **Type Four: Exhortation**

1. Let the Lord be your Light
2. Let the Lord be your Salvation
3. Let the Lord be your Refuge

## **Type Five: Application**

1. How the Lord can be our daily Light in darkness.
2. How the Lord can be our Savior when we sense our guilt.
3. How the Lord can be our strong Refuge when we feel besieged.

**THE LAW OF APPLICATION: PART 1**

(from chapter 5)

1. Application is the central reason for God's revelation (126).
2. Application is the responsibility of the preacher/teacher (126).
3. Application and information should be balanced (127).
4. Application focuses Scripture on the students' (congregation) needs (131).
5. Application that has impacted the teacher/preacher tends to impact the student (133).
6. Prepare your message during the whole week (minimally) before you preach (135).
7. Ask the Lord to apply the specific truth you will teach to you (135).
8. Communicate with all of your mind, will and emotion the applications the Lord has taught you from the Bible (135).
9. Application must ultimately lead the student (congregation) from studying the Bible to obeying the Lord (136).

***“Apply for Life Change”***

## **THE LAW OF APPLICATION: PART 2**

(from chapter 6)

1. Ask God to develop in your heart an applier's heart (156).
2. Prepare applications in relation to your people's needs (157).
3. Plan all parts of the message to contribute to the application (158).
4. Lead your people beyond general applications to specific steps of obedience (159).
5. Illustrate the application of Scripture, history, personal experience, and imagination (159).
6. Employ an appropriate style when calling for commitment (161).
7. Strengthen applications with accountability (To self, peers, significant persons, pastor/mentor, God) (163).

## Appendix 2

### **TEN STEPS TO APPLYING THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE**

1. Find the meat of the passage.
2. Hold fast to the belief that every passage contains at least one key principle.
3. Finding the essence of the content takes time and effort.
4. Pray for illumination from the Holy Spirit to see more of what has already been written.
5. Think! Think a lot! Meditate over and over on the passage.
6. Don't hunt for the principle in the commentaries.
7. Relax. Enjoy developing the principle through your personality.
8. State the principle in a simple and motivating sentence.
9. Make sure your principle is thoroughly biblical.
10. Lead your people to leap past your principle and "prediscover" their own applications.

Appendix 3

**THE LAW OF RETENTION: PART 1**

(from chapter 7)

1. Retention of facts by your people is your responsibility (180)
2. Retention of facts is effective only after they are understood (181)
3. Retention increases as your people recognize the contents relevance (182)
4. Retention requires you to focus on the facts that are most important (184)
5. Retention arranges the facts so they are easy to memorize (186)
6. Retention strengthens long-term memory through regular review (187)
7. Retention minimizes time for memorization to maximize time for application (188)

*“Master the Minimum”*

**THE LAW OF RETENTION: PART 2**

(from chapter 8)

1. Represent the facts in a picture (210)
2. Express the facts with a story (213)
3. Transfer the facts by the alphabet (214) [?]
4. Associate the facts with objects and actions (216)
5. Impress the facts with drama (216)
6. Note the facts through music (217)
7. Summarize the facts with graphs and charts (217)



## Appendix 4

### **SEVEN KEYS TO BIBLICAL RETENTION**

1. Review is the primary method by which everyone memorizes everything.
2. Review is effective only when your people adequately understand the material.
3. Review should be practiced in the same order and with the same words until the Irreducible Minimum is fully memorized.
4. Review should be most frequent and intense when the facts are first taught.
5. Review should be regularly practiced but spaced less and less frequently as time passes.
6. Review should continue until your people demonstrate mastery of the Irreducible Minimum.
7. Review should be done using a variety of methods.

## Appendix 5

### **THE LAW OF EQUIPPING**

(from chapter 12)

Instruct	➔	Prepare	➔	“I understand”(315)
Illustrate	➔	Preview	➔	“I see”(315)
Involve	➔	Practicum	➔	“I’m doing it”(316)
Improve	➔	Perform	➔	“I’m getting better” (317)
Inspire	➔	Passing it on	➔	“I’ll keep it going”(320)

## **BILL GOTHARD ON LIFE-CHANGING SERMONS**

### **PREPARE YOUR MESSAGE AROUND FOUR UNSPOKEN QUESTIONS:**

#### ***Why is it important for me to listen to your message?***

\* Be Convincing

1. You will solve a problem you have been having in your personal life, marriage, family, business (illustrations)
2. You will avoid problems in the future by making this commitment and taking this action (illustrations)
3. You will learn more about Christ and experience more of God's power and the fruit of God's Spirit
4. You will finally understand the answer to a question which you have had

#### ***Exactly how do I apply your message to my life?***

\* Be Clear

1. What are the steps of action which I must take?
2. How can I be sure that this is sound doctrine?
3. What about my unique circumstances?

#### ***Who are your illustrations of this?***

\* Be Correct

1. Illustrations from the Bible of those who followed this action in their lives and succeeded
2. Illustrations from the Bible of those who did not follow this action and the consequences.
3. Illustrations from history of famous Christians who did or did not follow this, and the results

#### ***What do you want me to do right now?***

\* Be Convicting

1. What decision should I make to do this?
2. When should I put this into action?
3. Who is going to check up on me?
4. What if I encounter unforeseen problems?

## **SECTION 13**

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical Interpretation**

## **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical Interpretation**

### **The Spirit helps the interpreter only in the area of “Significance”:**

- (1) The view of Robert Stein, Daniel Fuller, Scott Hafemann, etc.
- (2) Seems to be supported by some Biblical Texts
  - (a) Stein’s and Fuller’s interpretation of 1 Cor 2:14
- (3) Helps explain several phenomena
  - a. The largely correct and helpful biblical studies of some unbelievers
  - b. The incorrect and contrasting work of some Christians who claim the illumination of the Spirit
- (4) This view is very understandable, clear and measurable.

### **Against the “Significance-Only” view:**

- (1) Not the traditional view of Protestants since the Reformation
- (2) Other Biblical texts seem contradict this view (see below)
- (3) Does the “Significance-Only” view discount the noetic effects of the Fall? (a semi-Pelagian epistemology?)

### **The Spirit helps the interpreter with both “Understanding” and “Significance”:**

- (1) The traditional view of Protestants since the Reformation.
- (2) Seems to be supported by Biblical texts:
  - (a) Matt 13:13-17; Mark 8:18; Rom 1:21-25; Rom 11:7-8
  - (b) John 14-17?
  - (c) 1 John 2:20-27
  - (d) John 20:19-23; Luke 24:40-47
  - (e) 2 Corinthians 3:13-18
  - (f) Eph 4:11-16
- (3) Helps explain several phenomena
  - (a) The experience of Christians in understanding the Biblical text
  - (b) The example of many unbelievers who grossly distort or misinterpret the Biblical text

- (4) The Bible does not dichotomize volition and cognition. Proper Mental Understanding and Believing Response are two sides of the same coin in the Biblical view.

**Against the traditional “Illumination and Conviction” view:**

- (1) The helpful biblical studies of some unbelievers.
- (2) The difficulty of quantifying or demonstrating “illumination” in a consistent and persuasive way.
- (3) The difficulty of defining exactly how and to what degree illumination works in believers.
- (4) The diversity of interpretation among genuine believers (though this can be overstated).

## **Various Approaches to the Miraculous in Scripture**

### **1. The Supernatural Approach**

- a. The event(s) really took place.
- b. The event(s) happened as recorded.
- c. The text proclaims a divine event .
- d. Since God performed this event, search for a natural cause is irrelevant.
- e. NOTE: A closed cause-effect continuum denied. Openness in history maintained.
- f. The intention of the text (the author's meaning) is maintained.

### **2. The Rationalist Approach**

- a. Presupposition – The event(s) could not have taken place.
- b. The event(s) happened differently than recorded.
- c. The text contains a natural event behind it.
- d. The natural cause of this event can and should be learned.
- e. NOTE: A closed cause-effect continuum affirmed.
- f. The intention of the text (the author's meaning) is not maintained.

### **3. The Mythical Approach**

- a. The event(s) could not have taken place (cf. 2[a] above).
- b. The text proclaims a divine event (cf. 1[c] above).

- c. The search for a natural cause is irrelevant (cf. 1[d]).
- d. There is neither a divine nor natural cause, since the text proclaims a myth.
- e. NOTE: A closed cause-effect continuum affirmed.
- f. The "deeper" intention of the text (the author's meaning) is maintained.

**"Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?"  
(a famous article by Rudolf Bultmann)**

"One presupposition that cannot be dismissed is the historical method of interrogating the text (p. 291)."

This involves:

- (1) "It belongs to the historical method, of course, that a text is interpreted in accordance with the rules of grammar and of the meaning of the words (p. 291)."
- (2) "The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect . . . this closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers, and that therefore there is not 'miracle' in the sense of the word. Such a miracle would be an event whose cause did not lie within history (pp. 291-92)."



## **SECTION 14**

### **Sermon Teaching Structure and Outlining**

“Exegesis is never an end in itself. Its purposes are never fully realized until it begins to take into account the problems of transferring what has been learned from the text over to the waiting Church. To put it more bluntly, exegesis must come to terms with the audience as well as with what the author meant by the word he used.” (Kaiser, p.149)

“The exegete must resist the temptation to impose a mold over the text by forcing that text to answer one of his favorite questions or to deal with one of the contemporary issues development; that our culture wants to have solved.” (Ibid., 153)

“It is hoped that God's men and women will be challenged to reread that very same Biblical text on their own soon after they have heard the message. Even if they cannot recall the outline (they probably will not - sorry!), the Word of Scripture will still speak to them because they have thought through its structure and shape in such a way as to have divinely met God in that text.” (Ibid., 160)

A. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE OUTLINING OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT:

1. Use complete sentences not single words or phrases.
2. Use, when possible, a key word or phrase to assure consistency in division statements
3. Craft your statements so that they stand alone as universal principles.
4. Follow a logical progression of thought in the arrangement of the division statements.
5. Use present tense, contemporary language suitable for the audience you address.
6. State your division statements as sound theological principles which encourage faith in the hearer.
7. If additional development is needed under a particular point, do so but make it simple.
8. Outline the text with your audience in mind.
9. Do not let the points stray from the main thesis.
10. Alliteration is O.K. for some, but is not a requirement for effective teaching or preaching.

B. WHY IS OUTLINING IMPORTANT?

1. It is important because it is foundational for effective communication.
2. It is important because it is helpful for understanding.
3. It is important because the human mind seeks unity.
4. It is important because the human mind seeks order.
5. It is important because it helps us know how we have gotten where we are and where we want to go.
6. It is important because it helps you gain a proper perspective on the text you are studying.
7. It is important because it helps us discover the pattern, order or logic of the original author.
8. It is important because it helps us isolate the main idea of the original author.
9. It is important because it helps us identify the main points or thoughts (different from the main idea) in the text and the subpoints which explain and amplify the main points or thoughts.

## A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR GOOD OUTLINING

- I. A well-developed outline has structure.
  - A. The main points are the central ideas designated by the Roman numerals I, II, III, etc.
  - B. Subpoints are the points that explain the main topics designated by Arabic #'s 1,2,3. They are subordinate to the main point either amplifying , supporting, or illustrating the main point.
  - C. Outlining beyond this stage is usually too detailed.
- II. The passage outline should honor the strategy of the original author.
- III. An effective outline deals with complete ideas and not partial thoughts or fragments.
  - A. Each point in the outline should be a complete sentence.
  - B. Usually you should use declarative or imperative statements instead of questions when outlining. The point of the outline is to explain and apply the text not develop questions. However, there are legitimate exceptions to this principle.
  - C. Each point should be a single idea most of the time. Avoid the use of compound and complex sentences.
- IV. Each main point will usually have at least two sub-points most of the time. [This is not a hard, fast rule.]

## **STEPS IN BIBLE TEACHING PREPARATION**

1. Pray!
2. Read the text several times in English.
3. Translate the text from Greek or Hebrew if you can.
4. Observation - make notes about what you observe re: people, plan, purpose of text, etc.
5. Investigation - of the background of the text.
6. Interpretation - Linguistic, Grammatical/Syntactical, Lexical, Doctrinal, etc.
7. Outline the text.
8. Determine the Main Idea of the Text (MIT).
9. State the MIT in Proposition Form: Subject and Complement.
10. Determine the specific objectives for the teaching.
11. Develop the teaching outline (teaching points).
12. Write out the conclusion of your teaching.
13. Write out the introduction of your teaching.
14. Write out the body - including illustrations and applications.

## Appendix 3

### STEPS TO SERMON PREPARATION (from *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Select the passage to be preached <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discover author's thoughts units</li> <li>2. In narrative: literary unit</li> <li>3. Usually a paragraph</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Read and reread the passage and gather notes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note context</li> <li>2. Investigate details: structure, vocabulary, grammar</li> <li>3. Use study tools</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Get the Big Idea (Exegetical Idea/CPT) Subject - What am I talking about? Complement - What exactly am I saying about it?</li> <li>4. Outline development of the idea from the passage.</li> <li>5. Analyze the idea (restate, explain, prove, or apply) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does it mean?</li> <li>2. Is it true? (how so?)</li> <li>3. So what? (what difference does it make?) purpose of the biblical writer (theological intent) indications of purpose, editorial comments, interpretations? Theological judgements made? Example of warning? intent for readers? why did the Holy Spirit include this in Scripture? Concerns for contemporary audience setting for original writing vs. our setting (common ground) how can we identify with Biblical audience? what do we know from additional revelation? Context basic principles</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Anticipate questions</li> <li>5. Assess accuracy of your conclusion <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. correctly understood the facts and asked the right questions (any other questions?)</li> <li>2. determined all the theological principles and assigned proper weight</li> <li>3. espouse truly biblical theology (no proof texting)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Restate the exegetical idea in light of the audience (Homiletical idea / CPS) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. precise</li> <li>2. personal</li> <li>3. an exact, memorable sentence</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Determine the purpose of the sermon <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. what to expect or accomplish?</li> <li>2. why did the author write this?</li> <li>3. destination/route/how to tell when arrived</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Decide how to accomplish the purpose (Sermon type) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. an idea to explained</li> <li>2. a proposition to be proved</li> <li>3. a principle to be applied</li> <li>4. a subject to be completed</li> <li>5. a story to be told.</li> <li>6. inductive/deductive/combination</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. Outline the sermon <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. in expository sermons, main points and sub-points come from the text</li> <li>2. each point a grammatically complete sentence directly relating the textual point to the audience</li> <li>3. write out clear transitions between points</li> </ol> </li> <li>10. Fill in the outline <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Restate</li> <li>2. Define</li> <li>3. Quotes</li> <li>4. Illustrations</li> <li>5. Explain</li> <li>6. Facts</li> <li>7. Narration</li> <li>8. Examples</li> </ol> </li> <li>11. Prepare introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. command Mention</li> <li>2. surface needs</li> <li>3. introduce body and conclusion</li> <li>4. ask for a verdict</li> <li>5. no new material</li> </ol> </li> <li>12. Use a clear style <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. clear outline</li> <li>2. short sentences</li> <li>3. simple sentence structure</li> <li>4. direct and personal</li> <li>5. vivid (specific, concrete details)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
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## **Method of Pastor Jim Wilson Huntsville, Alabama**

### EXEGETICAL OUTLINE: Colossians 1:3-8

- I. THE REASON PAUL GIVES THANKS TO GOD FOR THE COLOSSIANS IS BECAUSE HE HAS HEARD OF THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST AND LOVE FOR THE SAINTS WHICH ARE CAUSED BY THE HOPE RESERVED FOR THEM IN HEAVEN. (1:3-5e)
  - A. Paul always gives thanks to God when he prays for the Colossians (1:3)
  - B. The reason Paul gives thanks to God when praying for the Colossians is because he has heard of their faith in Christ and their love for all the saints (1:4)
  - C. The reason the Colossians have an active faith and love is because of the hope reserved for them in heaven. (1:5a)
- II. THE GOSPEL WHICH THE COLOSSIANS LEARNED FROM EPAPHRAS WAS BEARING FRUIT AND GROWING AMONG THEM AND IN ALL THE WORLD. (1:5b-8)
  - A. The Colossians had previously heard the gospel. (1:5b)
  - B. The gospel was bearing fruit and growing in all the world and in the Colossians (1:6e)
  - C. The gospel was bearing fruit in the Colossians from the day they heard and understood it. (1:6b)
  - D. The Colossians learned the gospel from Epaphras, the faithful servant of Christ who brings Paul a report of the Colossians' love (1:7-8)

#### IDEA:

THE REASON PAUL GIVES THANKS TO GOD FOR THE COLOSSIANS IS BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH AND LOVE WHICH ARE MOTIVATED BY HOPE, WHICH WAS COMMUNICATED TO THEM IN THE GOSPEL THROUGH EPAPHRAS AND WHICH (GOSPEL) IS EFFECTIVELY GROWING AMONG THEM AND IN ALL THE WORLD.

### EXEGETICAL OUTLINE: Colossians 1:9-14

- I. (IN LIGHT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS) PAUL PRAYS FOR THE COLOSSIANS. (9e)
- II. THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY BE CONTROLLED BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL (9b)
- III. THE RESULT OF BEING CONTROLLED BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL IS A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD. (10a)
- IV. THE MEANS BY WHICH ONE PLEASES GOD IS BY LIVING A LIFE OF GROWTH, ENDURANCE AND THANKSGIVING FOR SALVATION. (10b-4)
  - A. The means by which one has a God-pleasing lifestyle is by producing good works. (10b)
  - B. The means by which one has a God-pleasing lifestyle is by growing in the knowledge of God (10c)
  - C. The means by which one has a God-pleasing lifestyle is by relying on the strength of God's power, which will result in steadfastness under trial and patience toward people. (11)
  - D. The means by which one has a God-pleasing lifestyle is by joyfully giving thanks to God for His work of salvation. (12-14)
    - 1. God is to be thanked for forgiving us and giving us an inheritance. (12)
    - 2. God is to be thanked for rescuing us and bringing us into His kingdom. (13)
    - 3. The Son is the source of our redemption and forgiveness. (14)

#### IDEA:

THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY BE CONTROLLED BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL SO THEY MIGHT LIVE A PLEASING LIFE OF GROWTH, ENDURANCE, AND THANKSGIVING FOR SALVATION.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE: Colossians 1:15-20

- I. JESUS (GOD'S BELOVED SON - v. 14) IS THE LIKENESS AND MANIFESTATION OF GOD, WHO IS INVISIBLE. (15a)
- II. JESUS IS PRE-EXISTENT AND SOVEREIGN OVER ALL BECAUSE ALL THINGS (INCLUDING THE ANGELIC POWERS OF THE COLOSSIANS HERESY) HAVE BEEN CREATED IN HIM, THROUGH HIM, AND FOR HIM, AND BECAUSE HE SUSTAINS THEM. (15b-17)
  - A. Jesus is pre-existent and sovereign over every creature. (15b)
  - B. The reason that Jesus is pre-existent and sovereign over every creature is because all things (including the angelic powers of the Colossians heresy) have been created in Him, through Him and for Him. (16)
  - C. Jesus is pre-existent and pre-eminent over all. (17a)
  - D. The reason that Jesus is pre-existent and sovereign over all because He sustains all things. (17b)
- III. JESUS IS PRE-EXISTENT AND SOVEREIGN OVER THE CHURCH BECAUSE HE IS ITS BEGINNING, THE HABITATION OF ALL DIVINE ATTRIBUTES, AND THE AGENT OF GOD'S RECONCILING WORK. (18-20)
  - A. Jesus is sovereign over the church (10a)
  - B. The reason Jesus is sovereign over the Church is because He is its beginning, its sovereign first-born from the dead (18b)
  - C. The purpose of Jesus' being the beginning of the Church, its sovereign first-born, is so that in all things – new creation as well as old – He might be pre-eminent. (18c)
  - D. The reason why the Son is pre-eminent in the Church is because God was pleased that all the fullness of the divine attributes take up their abode in Him. (19)
  - E. The reason why Christ is pre-eminent in the Church is because God was pleased to reconcile to Himself, through Him all things - whether on earth or in heaven. (20)
  - F. The means by which God reconciled all things to Himself was through Jesus' death on the cross. (20)

IDEA:

JESUS, THE LIKENESS AND MANIFESTATION OF GOD, IS PRE-EMINENT IN BOTH CREATION AND THE CHURCH BECAUSE HE WAS THE CREATING AGENT AND IS SOVEREIGN IN EACH.

Colossians 1:24-29

1. PAUL REJOICES IN HIS AFFLICTIONS IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHURCH AND BY THOSE AFFLICTIONS, HE (AS CHRIST'S SERVANT) RECEIVES THE SUFFERING A HOSTILE WORLD WOULD INFLICT ON CHRIST. (v.24)
  - A. Paul rejoices because of his afflictions which are in the interest of the Colossians. (v. 24a)
  - B. Paul suffers physically in the interest of the church and in so doing he (as Christ's servant) receives the suffering a hostile world would inflict on Christ. (v. 24b)
- II. (THE CONTENT OF THE REVEALED SECRET) WHICH PAUL IS RESPONSIBLE TO PROCLAIM IS THAT CHRIST INDWELLS EACH BELIEVER AND SO ASSURES ALL BELIEVERS OF COMPLETE SALVATION. (vs. 25-27)
  - A. Paul has become a servant of the Church because he was given a secret trust by God (v. 25)
  - B. (The content of the sacred trust given to Paul by God) was to proclaim the word of God, which is the previously hidden, but now revealed, glorious secret which God wished to make known to the Gentles. (vs. 26-27a)
  - C. (The content of the previously hidden, but now revealed, glorious secret) is that Christ indwells each believer and this assures all believers of complete salvation. (v. 27b)
- III. THE PURPOSE OF PAUL WORKING HARD BY GOD'S POWER TO PROCLAIM CHRIST IS THAT MEN WILL BECOME MATURE IN CHRIST. (v. 28-29)
  - A. Paul proclaims Christ by warning and teaching all men. (v. 28a)
  - B. The purpose of Paul proclaiming Christ to all men is that all men will become mature in Christ (v. 28b)
  - C. The means by which Paul is able to work hard for the purpose of maturing men is by relying on the power of God to work through him. (v. 29)

IDEA:

THE PURPOSE OF PAUL'S HARD-WORKING, GOD-EMPOWERED MINISTRY OF PROCLAIMING THE TRUTH OF CHRIST INDWELLING MEN AND ASSURING THEM OF COMPLETE SALVATION (WHICH MINISTRY WAS HIS SACRED TRUST, AND FOR WHICH MINISTRY HE SUFFERED PHYSICALLY) WAS TO BRING MEN TO MATURITY.



EXEGETICAL OUTLINE: Colossians 2:1-5

- I. THE PURPOSE OF PAUL INFORMING THE COLOSSIANS OF HIS STRUGGLES FOR THEM IS THAT THEY WILL BE STRENGTHENED (AGAINST FALSE TEACHING) BY MEANS OF BEING UNITED IN LOVE SO THEY WILL HAVE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH WILL LEAD TO A FULL KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IN WHOM IS STORED ALL WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. (1-3)
  - A. Paul's desire for the Colossians and those in Laodemia (and Hieropolis) is that they know his intense, internal struggles which he has on their behalf. (1)
  - B. The purpose for Paul informing the Colossians about his struggles is that they will be strengthened (against false teaching). (2e)
  - C. The means by which the Colossians will be strengthened (against false teaching) is by being united in love. (2b)
  - D. The goal of the Colossians being united in love is that they will have a full assurance of understanding, (2c)
  - E. The goal of the Colossians being united in love and having full assurance of understanding is that they will have a full knowledge of Christ [the mystery of God]. (2d)
  - F. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored in Christ (3)
- II. THE PURPOSE OF PAUL TELLING THE COLOSSIANS THAT ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE ARE STORED IN CHRIST IS THAT THEY WILL NOT BE DECEIVED BY PERSUASIVE SPEECH. (4)
- III. EVEN THOUGH PAUL IS PHYSICALLY SEPARATED FROM THE COLOSSIANS HE REMAINS CONCERNED FOR THEM AND REJOICES ABOUT THEIR ORDERLY LIVES AND STEADFAST FAITH. (5)
  - A. Even though Paul is physically separated from the Colossians, he is still concerned for them. (5a)
  - B. Paul rejoices to be made aware of the Colossians' orderly lives and steadfast faith in Christ (5b)

IDEA #1

THE PURPOSE OF PAUL TELLING THE COLOSSIANS OF HIS STRUGGLES FOR THEM IS THAT THEY WILL BE STRENGTHENED (AGAINST FALSE TEACHING) BY MEANS OF BEING UNITED IN LOVE WHICH WILL RESULT IN FULL ASSURANCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST WHICH WILL KEEP THEM FROM BEING DECEIVED.

IDEA #2:

DESPITE HIS PHYSICAL ABSENCE PAUL REMAINS CONCERNED FOR THE COLOSSIANS AND REJOICES BECAUSE OF THEIR ORDERLY LIVES AND STEADFAST FAITH.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE: Colossians 2:6-10

I. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY CONTINUE TO LIVE THEIR LIVES WITH CHRIST JESUS AS THEIR LORD BY WAY OF HAVING BEEN MADE SECURE IN CHRIST AND BY WAY OF CONTINUALLY BEING BUILT UP IN CHRIST AND BY CONTINUALLY BEING ESTABLISHED IN THE TRUTH THEY WERE TAUGHT AND BY CONTINUALLY EXPRESSING THANKS. (vs. 6, 7)

A. (In light of the Colossians steadfast faith) (the content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians] is that they continue to live their lives with Christ Jesus as their Lord, in accord with what they have been taught (v.6)

1. The Colossians had been taught that Christ Jesus is Lord (v. 6e)

2. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they continue to live their lives with Christ Jesus as Lord (v.6b)

B. The manner in which the Colossians are to continue to live with Christ Jesus as their Lord (since they have been made secure in Christ) is by way of continually being built up in Christ and by continually being established in the truth they were taught and by continually expressing thanks. (v. 7)

1. The Colossians were made secure in Christ (at conversion). (v. 7a)

2. The manner in which the Colossians are to continue to live with Christ Jesus as their Lord is by way of continually being built up in Christ (v. 7b)

3. The manner in which the Colossians are to continue to live with Christ Jesus as their Lord is by way of continually being established in the truth they were taught. (v. 7c)

4. The manner in which the Colossians are to continue to live with Christ Jesus as their Lord is by way of continually expressing thanks (v. 7d)

II. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY BE CONSTANTLY ON GUARD AGAINST BEING LED AWAY FROM THE TRUTH BY MEANS OF THE COLOSSIAN PHILOSOPHY WHICH IS AN EMPTY DECEPTION AND A HUMAN FABRICATION AND WHICH PAYS ALLEGIANCE TO COSMIC SPIRITS RATHER THAN CHRIST. (v. 8)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they be constantly on guard against being led away from the truth. (v. 8a)

B. The means by which the Colossians may be led away from the truth is through the (Colossian) philosophy, which is an empty deception and a human fabrication, and which pays allegiance to cosmic spirits rather than Christ. (v. 8b)

III. THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS ARE NOT TO BE LED AWAY FROM THE TRUTH BY THE COLOSSIAN PHILOSOPHY IS BECAUSE ALL THE FULLNESS OF DEITY PERMANENTLY RESIDES EXCLUSIVELY IN THE INCARNATE AND GLORIFIED PERSON OF CHRIST AND BECAUSE THE COLOSSIANS HAVE BEEN MADE SPIRITUALLY COMPLETE BECAUSE OF THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST, WHO IS THE SUPREME RULER OF ALL OTHER AUTHORITIES. (vs. 9-10)

A. The reason the Colossians are not to be led away from the truth by the Colossian philosophy is because all the fullness of deity permanently resides exclusively in Christ. (v. 9)

B. The reason the Colossians are not to be led away from the truth by the Colossian philosophy is because they have been made spiritually complete because of their union with Christ. (v. 10a)

C. Christ is the supreme ruler of all other authorities. (v. 10b)

IDEA:

THE REASON THAT PAUL EXHORTS THE COLOSSIANS TO CONTINUE TO LIVE WITH CHRIST AS LORD (BY WAY OF CONTINUALLY BEING BUILT UP ESTABLISHED IN THE TRUTH AND EXPRESSING THANKS) AND TO CONSTANTLY BE ON GUARD AGAINST BEING LED AWAY FROM THE TRUTH BY THE COLOSSIAN PHILOSOPHY IS BECAUSE ALL THE FULLNESS OF DEITY PERMANENTLY RESIDES EXCLUSIVELY IN CHRIST AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN MADE SPIRITUALLY COMPLETE BECAUSE OF THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE - Colossians 2:11-15

I. THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS ARE NOT TO BE LED AWAY FROM CHRIST BY THE COLOSSIAN HERESY IS BECAUSE THE COLOSSIANS WERE SAVED (SPIRITUALLY CIRCUMCISED) BY MEANS OF GOD'S DIVINE WORK (IN CHRIST) OF REMOVING THEIR SINFUL NATURE BY MEANS OF THEIR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST THROUGH WHICH THEIR SINFUL NATURE WAS RENDERED INOPERATIVE AND THROUGH WHICH THEY WERE GIVEN NEW LIFE THROUGH THEIR FAITH IN GOD. (11-12)

- A. The Colossians were saved (spiritually circumcised) because of their union with Christ (11b)
- B. The means by which the Colossians were saved by God's divine work of removing their sinful nature (and not by means of a physical rite). (11b)
- C. The active agent of the Colossian's salvation was Christ. (11c)
- D. The means by which the Colossians were saved was by way of their identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection through which their sinful nature was rendered inoperative (Rom 6) and through which they were given life through their faith in God. (12)

II. THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS ARE NOT TO BE LED AWAY FROM CHRIST BY THE COLOSSIAN HERESY IS BECAUSE THE COLOSSIANS (WHO WERE FORMERLY SPIRITUALLY DEAD) WERE GIVEN SPIRITUAL LIFE BY GOD BY MEANS OF GRACIOUSLY FORGIVING THEIR DELIBERATE ACTS OF DISOBEDIENCE BY WAY OF CANCELLING AND REMOVING THE DEBT OF MOSAIC REGULATIONS (13, 14)

- A. The Colossians (who were formerly spiritually dead, both in practice and nature) were given spiritual life by God (13b)
- B. The means by which God gave the Colossians spiritual life was by way of graciously forgiving their deliberate acts of disobedience. (13b)
- C. The means by which God graciously forgave the disobedience of the Colossians was by canceling and removing the debt of Mosaic regulations which the Colossians could not keep (14)

III. THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS ARE NOT TO BE LED AWAY FROM CHRIST BY THE COLOSSIAN HERESY IS BECAUSE GOD HAS EXPOSED EVIL SPIRITUAL FORCES TO PUBLIC DISGRACE BY DEFEATING THEM AT THE CROSS AND DIVESTING THEM OF THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY. (16)

- A. God exposed evil spirit forces to public disgrace by divesting them of their power and authority. (15a)
- B. The means by which God publicly exposed evil spirit forces to public disgrace were by defeating them in Christ (at the cross). (15b)

IDEA:

THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS ARE NOT TO BE LED AWAY FROM CHRIST BY THE COLOSSIAN HERESY IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN SAVED (SPIRITUALLY CIRCUMCISED) BY GOD'S WORK OF REMOVING THEIR SINFUL NATURE AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN SPIRITUAL LIFE BY MEANS OF GOD'S GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS AND BECAUSE GOD HAS ACCOMPLISHED COMPLETE VICTORY OVER EVIL SPIRITUAL FORCES.

## EXEGETICAL OUTLINE - Colossians 2:16-23

I. [IN LIGHT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL FULLNESS] (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS ABOUT THEIR SPIRITUAL CONDITION WITH REFERENCE TO JEWISH REGULATIONS BECAUSE THESE PRACTICES ARE ONLY AN INSUBSTANTIAL FORESHADOWING WHEREAS CHRIST IS THE SPIRITUAL REALITY. (16-17)

A. [In light of their spiritual fullness of the content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians] is that they not allow anyone to make judgements about their spiritual condition with reference to Jewish regulation of diet and holy days. (v. 16)

B. The reason the Colossians are not to allow themselves to be judged with reference to Jewish regulations is because these practices are only an insubstantial foreshadowing whereas Christ is the spiritual reality. (17)

I. [IN LIGHT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL FULLNESS] (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY NOT ALLOW ANYONE (WHO IS UNJUSTIFIABLY ARROGANT) TO PASS JUDGEMENT ON THEM BY MEANS OF TAKING DELIGHT IN ASCETIC PRACTICES AND MYSTICALLY ENTERING HEAVEN TO PARTICIPATE IN ANGELIC WORSHIP. BECAUSE SUCH A PERSON WAS NOT MAINTAINED CLOSE CONNECTION WITH CHRIST WHO IS THE SOURCE OF GROWTH FOR THE CHURCH. (18-19)

A. (In light of their spiritual fullness) (the content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that not allow anyone to pass judgement on them (regarding their spiritual condition) by means of taking delight in ascetic practices and mystically entering the heavenly realm to participate in the worship angels perform. (18a)

B. The person who delights in ascetic ritual and mystical angelic worship is unjustifiably arrogant by means of his carnal mind (18b)

C. The arrogant person who delights in ascetic ritual and mystical angelic worship has not maintained close connection with Christ (the head) through whom all members of the church (the body) are nourished, bound together and grow (spiritually). (19)

II. THE RESULT OF (IDENTIFICATION WITH THE DEATH OF CHRIST WHICH FREED THE COLOSSIANS FROM THE RULES CONTROL OF REGULATIONS) WHICH ARE PERISHABLE AND WHICH HAVE A (MERE) REPUTATION FOR WISDOM BY MEANS OF SELF-DENIAL BUT WHICH LEAD TO SENSUAL GRATIFICATION (20-23)

A. The result of (identification with the death of Christ which freed the Colossians from the control of demonic spirits) is that the Colossians should not subject themselves to ascetic rules and regulations. (20,21)

B. The physical elements behind ascetic rules and regulations (based on human commands and teachings) are perishable (and of no importance). (22)

C. The human, ascetic rules and regulations - which have a (mere) reputation for wisdom by means of self-made religion and ascetic ritual and harsh bodily treatment, have no spiritual value - lead to the gratification of the flesh. (23)

### IDEA:

[IN LIGHT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL FULLNESS] AND BECAUSE OF THEIR IDENTIFICATION WITH THE DEATH OF CHRIST, (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS ABOUT THEIR SPIRITUAL CONDITION WITH REFERENCE TO JEWISH REGULATIONS AND THAT THEY NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO PASS JUDGEMENT ON THEM BY MEANS OF TAKING DELIGHT IN ASCETIC PRACTICE AND MYSTICAL ANGELIC WORSHIP AND THAT THEY NOT SUBJECT THEMSELVES TO ASCETIC RULES WHICH HAVE NO SPIRITUAL VALUE.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE - Colossians 3:1-4

I. IN LIGHT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL FULLNESS AND THE INADEQUACY OF LEGALISM AND ASCETIC, MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES) AND BECAUSE OF THEIR NEW LIFE THROUGH IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST'S RESURRECTION (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY ACTIVELY PURSUE AND CONTINUALLY THINK ABOUT THINGS RELATED TO THEIR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST (WHO IS THE HONORED AND EXALTED ONE) AND NOT THINGS RELATED TO THEIR OLD LIFE. (19-2)

- A. The Colossians have new life because of their identification with the resurrection of Christ. (1a)
- B. The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they actively pursue things related to their new life (1b)
- C. Christ is honored and exalted in heaven. (1c)
- D. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they continually think about things related to their new life, and not things that we related to their old life. (2)

II. THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS ARE TO ACTIVELY PURSUE AND CONTINUALLY THINK ABOUT THINGS RELATED TO THEIR NEW LIFE IS BECAUSE THEY ARE DEAD TO THE OLD LIFE AND THEIR NEW LIFE IS CONCEALED AND/OR SECURE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST IN GOD AND BECAUSE THEY WILL BE VISIBLY MANIFESTED IN GLORY WHEN CHRIST (WHO IS THEIR LIFE) IS VISIBLY MANIFESTED IN GLORY (AT THE  $\pi\alpha\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ ). (3-4)

- A. The reason the Colossians are to actively pursue and continually think about things related to their new life is because they are dead to the old life (3a)
- B. The reason the Colossians are to actively think about things related to their new life is because their new life is concealed and /or secured together with Christ in God. (3b)
- C. The reason the Colossians are to actively pursue and continually think about things related to their new life is because they will be visibly manifested in glory when Christ (who is their life) is visibly manifested in glory (at the  $\pi\alpha\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ ) (4)

IDEA:

[THE OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY CONTINUALLY THINK ABOUT AND ACTIVELY PURSUE THINGS RELATED TO THEIR LIFE NEW BECAUSE THEY ARE DEAD TO THE OLD LIFE AND THEIR NEW LIFE IS CONCEALED AND SECURE IN CHRIST AND WILL BE VISIBLY MANIFESTED ( $\pi\alpha\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ ).

## EXEGETICAL OUTLINE - Colossians 3:5-11

I. (IN LIGHT OF THE COLOSSIAN'S UNION WITH CHRIST IN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION...) (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY COMPLETELY EXTERMINATE GROSS SENSUAL SINS BECAUSE SUCH SINS FORMERLY CHARACTERIZED THEIR PAGAN LIFE-STYLE. (vs. 5-7)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians is that) they completely exterminate gross sensual sins (v. 5)
- B. The reason the Colossians should completely exterminate gross sensual sins is because God's wrath comes on such sins. (v.6)
- C. The reason the Colossians should completely exterminate gross sensual sins is because such sins formerly characterized the Colossian's pagan lifestyle (v. 7)

II. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY RID THEMSELVES OF SINS OF IMPROPER SPEECH AND STOP LYING TO ONE ANOTHER BECAUSE THEY ARE NOW PART OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. (vs. 8-11)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians is that) they now rid themselves of sins of improper speech. (v. 8)
- B. The reason the Colossians should not lie to one another is because they are now part of the Christian community. (vs. 9-11)
  - 1. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they should not lie to one another. (v. 9a)
  - 2. The reason the Colossians should not lie to one another is because they have discarded their former pagan lifestyle. (v. 9b)
  - 3. The reason the Colossians should not lie to one another is because they have identified with the Christian community in which there are no distinctions between believers. (vs. 10-11a)
  - 4. The reason that there are no distinctions between believers in the Christian community is because Christ is all and in everyone who is in the community. (v. 11b)

IDEA:

THE REASON THE COLOSSIANS SHOULD CEASE FROM SENSUAL AND SPEECH SINS IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE ABANDONED THEIR FORMER LIFE-STYLE AND ARE NOW A PART OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE- Colossians 3:12-17

I. (BECAUSE THEY HAVE BECOME A PART OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY) [THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS] IS THAT THEY PRACTICE COMPASSION, HUMILITY AND PATIENCE BY MEANS OF TOLERATING AND FORGIVE EACH (BECAUSE GOD HAS FORGIVEN THEM) AND THAT THEY PRACTICE LOVE WHICH WILL PRODUCE CORPORATE MATURITY. (12-14)

A. (In light of the fact that the Colossians have become a part of the Christian community) (v. 10) (the content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they (God's chosen, set-apart, and beloved people) practice compassion, humility, and patience. (12)

B. The means by which the Colossians practice compassion, humility and patience is by way of tolerating and forgiving each other whom there are causes for complaint. (13e)

C. The reason the Colossians are to tolerate and forgive each other is because God has forgiven them. (13b)

D. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians is that they practice love which unite them its them (the Colossians) and produce corporate maturity (14)

II. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY MAINTAIN PEACE AMONG THEMSELVES BECAUSE THIS WAS GOD'S PURPOSE IN CALLING THEM INTO ONE BODY AND THAT THEY EXPRESS THANKS. ( 15)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is not that they maintain peace among themselves (15a)

B. The purpose of God calling the Colossians into one body was peace (15b)

C. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they express thanks. (15c)

III. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY (CORPORATELY) LEARN AND APPLY THE MESSAGE ABOUT CHRIST BY MEANS OF TEACHING AND WARNING EACH OTHER WITH SINCERE, WORSHIPFUL SINGING (16)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians is that they (corporately) learn and apply this message about Christ (16e)

B. The manner in which the Colossian body is to learn and apply the message about Christ is by wisely teaching and warning each other by means of sincere, worshipful singing. (14b)

IV. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN ALL ACTIVITIES OF LIFE IN A WAY THAT DEMONSTRATES THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO AND IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS CHRIST. (17)

IDEA:

(THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY PRACTICE CHRISTLIKE VIRTUES BY MEANS OF TOLERATING AND FORGIVING EACH OTHER AND PRACTICE LOVE WHICH WILL PRODUCE CORPORATE MATURITY, MAINTAIN PEACE AMONG THEMSELVES, EXPRESS THANKS, LEARN AND APPLY THE MESSAGE ABOUT CHRIST AND CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN A WAY THAT DEMONSTRATES THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO AND IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS CHRIST.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE - Colossians 3:16-21

I. (THE CONTENT) OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIAN WIVES) IS THAT THEY VOLUNTARILY SUBMIT THEMSELVES TO THE GOD-ORDAINED AUTHORITY OF THEIR HUSBAND BECAUSE THIS IS APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR FOR CHRISTIAN WIVES. (V. 18)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian wives) is that they voluntarily submit themselves to the God-ordained authority of their husbands. (18a)

B. The reason Christian wives are to voluntarily submit themselves to their husbands is because this is appropriate behavior for Christian wives. (18b)

II. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIAN HUSBANDS) IS THAT THEY SACRIFICIALLY (Eph. 5) LOVE THEIR WIVES AND NOT TREAT THEM IN A HARSH MANNER. (v. 19)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian husbands) is that they sacrificially (Eph. 5) love their wives. (19a)

B. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian husbands) is that they not treat their wives in a harsh manner. (19b)

III. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIAN CHILDREN) IS THAT THEY OBEY THEIR PARENTS BECAUSE OBEDIENCE IS PLEASING TO GOD. (v. 20)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian children) is that they obey their parents. (20a)

B. The reason Christian Children are to obey their parents is because obedience pleases God. (20b)

IV. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIAN FATHERS) IS THAT THEY NOT IRRITATE (BY OVERCORRECTION) THEIR CHILDREN BECAUSE THIS WILL DISCOURAGE THEIR CHILDREN. (v. 21)

A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian fathers) is that they not irritate (by over-correction) their children. (21a)

B. The reason Christian fathers are not to irritate (by over-correction) their children is because this will discourage their children. (21b)

IDEA:

[THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIAN FAMILIES] IS THAT WIVES SUBMIT TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE HUSBAND AND PARENTS, BECAUSE THIS IS APPROPRIATE AND PLEASING BEHAVIOR AND THAT THE HUSBAND/FATHER LOVE HIS WIFE AND NOT TREAT HER HARSHLY AND THAT HE NOT IRRITATE HIS CHILDREN WHICH WILL LEAD TO DISCOURAGEMENT.



EXEGETICAL OUTLINE- Colossians 3:22-4:1

I. THE MANNER IN WHICH CHRISTIAN SLAVES ARE TO OBEY THEIR EARTHLY MASTERS IS SINCERELY AND OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST AND NOT WITH HYPOCRITICAL OBEDIENCE MEANT ONLY TO BE SEEN BY MEN AND MEANT TO PLEASE ONLY MEN. (22)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian slaves) is that they obey their earthly masters in all things. (22a)
- B. The manner in which Christian slaves are to obey their earthly masters is not by hypocritical obedience which is meant only to be seen by men and intended only to please men. (22b)
- C. The manner in which Christian slaves are to obey their earthly masters is sincerely. (22c)
- D. The manner in which Christian slaves are to obey their earthly masters is out of reverence for Christ. (22d)

II. THE REASON CHRISTIAN SLAVES ARE TO WORK HARD AND RENDER THEIR SERVICE FOR CHRIST AND NOT MEN IS BECAUSE CHRIST WILL GIVE AN ETERNAL REWARD FOR GOOD SERVICE AND WILL IMPARTIALLY PUNISH POOR WORKING SLAVES. (23-25)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian slaves) is that they work hard and render their service to Christ and not men. (23)
- B. The reason Christian slaves are to work hard for Christ and not men is because Christ will give them an eternal reward (24a)
- C. Slaves, in reality, serve Christ. (24b)
- D. The reason Christian slaves are to work hard for Christ and not men is because the slave who does wrong will be punished by Christ who is not partial. (25)

III. THE REASON CHRISTIAN MASTERS ARE TO TREAT THEIR SLAVES WITH FAIRNESS IS BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT THEY HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN (TO WHOM THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE). (4:1)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to Christian masters) is that they treat their slaves with justice and fairness. (4:19)
- B. The reason that Christian masters are to treat their slaves with justice and fairness is because they know that they have Master in heaven (to whom they are accountable). (4:1b)

IDEA:

THE REASON CHRISTIAN SLAVES ARE TO SINCERELY OBEY THEIR EARTHLY MASTERS AND WORK FOR CHRIST AND NOT MEN IS BECAUSE CHRIST WILL GIVE AN IMPARTIAL, ETERNAL REWARD AND THE REASON CHRISTIAN MASTERS ARE TO TREAT THEIR SLAVES FAIRLY IS BECAUSE THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO CHRIST (THEIR MASTER IN HEAVEN).

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE- Colossians 4:2-6

I. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY DEVOTEDLY COMMIT THEMSELVES TO PRAYER BY BEING SPIRITUALLY ALERT AND THANKFUL AND AT THE SAME TIME PRAY FOR HIM AND HIS ASSOCIATES THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO PROCLAIM THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION IN A CLEAR AND PROPER MANNER. (2-4)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossian) is that they devotedly commit themselves to prayer. (2a)
- B. The manner in which the Colossians are to devote themselves to prayer is by being spiritually alert and thankful. (2b)
- C. The content of the Colossians prayer for Paul and his associates is that God will provide opportunities for proclaiming Christ (the message of salvation). (3)
- D. The content of the Christian prayer for Paul is that he will proclaim the message of salvation clearly with proper speech. (4)

II. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY CONDUCT THEIR LIVES IN A WISE MANNER BEFORE UNBELIEVERS BY MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY AND THAT THEIR SPEECH ALWAYS BE GRACIOUS, WHOLESOME, AND INTERESTING SO THAT THEY WILL KNOW HOW TO RESPOND TO ALL UNBELIEVERS. (5-6)

- A. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they conduct their lives in a wise manner before unbelievers by means of making the most of every opportunity.
  - 1. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that they conduct their lives in a wise manner before unbelievers.
  - 2. The means by which the Colossians are to conduct their lives in a wise manner before unbelievers is by making the most of every opportunity.
- B. (The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians) is that their speech always be gracious, wholesome, and interesting.
- C. The result of the Colossians speech always being gracious, wholesome and interesting is that they will know how to respond to all unbelievers.

IDEA:

(THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO PRAYER BY BEING SPIRITUALLY ALERT AND THANKFUL AND THAT THEY PRAY THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROCLAIMING THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION AND THAT THEY CONDUCT THEMSELVES BEFORE UNBELIEVERS IN A WISE MANNER AND ALWAYS SPEAK IN A GRACIOUS, WHOLESOME, AND INTERESTING WAY.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE - Colossians 4:7-18

I. THE PURPOSE OF PAUL'S SENDING TYCHICHUS AND ONESIMUS TO THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY WILL INFORM THE COLOSSIANS OF EVERYTHING CONCERNING PAUL (IN ROMAN PRISON) SO THAT THEY WILL BE ENCOURAGED. (7-9)

- A. Tychichus (the beloved brother, faithful servant and fellow slave of Paul) will tell the Colossians all about Paul. (7)
- B. The purpose of Paul sending Tychichus to the Colossians is that he might tell them all about how Paul is doing and that they might be encouraged (by knowing about Paul). (8)
- C. Tychichus is traveling with Onesimus (the faithful and beloved brother of Paul who is a native of Colosse) and together they will inform the Colossians everything concerning Paul (in Roman prison). (9)

II. THOSE SENDING GREETINGS TO THE COLOSSIANS ARE THE ONLY THREE JEWISH CHRISTIANS WORKING WITH PAUL (WHO HAVE BEEN A CONSOLATION TO HIM) AND EPAPHRAS (WHO WORKS HARD AND PRAYS INTENSELY FOR THEIR MATURITY) AND LUKE AND DEMAS.

A. Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus (the only Jewish Christian working with Paul, and who are a source of a consolation to him) send their greetings to the Colossians. (10-11)

- 1. Aristarchus (Paul's fellow prisoner) and Mark (the cousin of Barnabas) send greetings to the Colossians. (10a)
- 2. The Colossians had received instructions to welcome Mark if he came to them. (10b)
- 3. Jesus (whose Roman name is Justus) sends greetings to the Colossians. (11a)
- 4. Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus are the only Jewish Christians "in whom we currently fellow workers with Paul in his ministry. (11b)
- 5. These three Jewish Christians have been a source of consolation to Paul (11c)

B. Epaphras (a native of Colosse) works hard for and continually prays with zeal and intensity for the Colossians that they will be mature and fully convinced of God's will. (12-13)

- 1. Epaphras (a native of Colosse and a servant of Christ Jesus) sends greetings to the Colossians. (12a)
- 2. Epaphras continually prays with zeal and intensity for the Colossians. (12b)
- 3. The content of Epaphras' prayer for the Colossians is that they will be mature and fully convinced of God's will. (12c)
- 4. The content of Paul's emphatic testimony is that Epaphras works hard on behalf of the Colossians, and those in Laodemia and Hierapolis. (13)

C. Luke (the beloved doctor) and Demas send greetings to the Colossians.

III. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S FINAL EXHORTATIONS TO THE COLOSSIANS) IS THAT THEY PASS ON HIS GREETINGS TO BELIEVERS IN LAODECIA AND THE HOUSE CHURCH OF NYMPHA, AND THAT THEY EXCHANGE AND PUBLICLY READ LETTERS WITH LAODECIA, AND THAT THEY ENCOURAGE ARCHIPPUS TO FULLY DISCHARGE HIS MINISTRY. (15-17)

A. [The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians] is that they pass on his greetings to the brothers in Laodemia and Nympha and the church which meets in her house. (15)

B. [The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians] is that after they have (publicly) read his epistle to them they are to see that it is (publicly) read at Laodemia, and they are to (publicly) read the (lost) letter to the Laodemians. (16)

C. [The content of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians] is that they encourage Archippus to fully discharge his ministry. (17)

IV. THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S CONCLUSION TO THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY REMEMBER HIS IMPRISONMENT AND HE PRAYS FOR GOD'S GRACE TO BE WITH THEM. (18)

IDEA #1

I. THE PURPOSE OF PAUL SENDING TYCHICHUS AND ONESIMUS TO THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY WILL INFORM THE COLOSSIANS OF EVERYTHING CONCERNING PAUL (IN ROMAN PRISON) SO THAT THEY WILL BE ENCOURAGED. (7-9)

IDEA #2

II. THOSE SENDING GREETINGS TO THE COLOSSIANS ARE THE ONLY THREE JEWISH CHRISTIANS WORKING WITH PAUL (WHO HAVE BEEN A CONSOLATION TO HIM) AND EPAPHRAS (WHO WORKS HARD AND PRAYS INTENSELY FOR THEIR MATURITY) AND LUKE AND DEMAS.

IDEA #3

III. (THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S FINAL EXHORTATIONS TO THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY PASS ON HIS GREETINGS TO BELIEVERS IN LAODECIA AND THE HOUSE CHURCH OF NYMPHA. AND THAT THEY EXCHANGE AND PUBLICLY READ LETTERS WITH LAODECA, AND THAT THEY ENCOURAGE ARCHIPPUS TO FULLY DISCHARGE HIS MINISTRY. (15-17)

IDEA #4

IV. THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S CONCLUSION TO THE COLOSSIANS IS THAT THEY REMEMBER HIS IMPRISONMENT AND HE PRAYS FOR GOD'S GRACE TO BE WITH THEM. (18)

**Pastor Jim Wilson**  
**Huntsville, Alabama**

**Sermon Notes**  
**COLOSSIANS – “Christ Is All”**

The PLACE called Colosse -

The PEOPLE of Colosse -

The PURPOSE of Colossians -

**I. COLOSSIANS AFFIRMS THE DEITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.**

**II. COLOSSIANS REJECTS THE NECESSITY OF MYSTICISM AND LEGALISM.**

***JESUS CHRIST WHO IS FULLY GOD  
AND ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN  
IS ALSO COMPLETELY SUFFICIENT***

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**Application**

- How are you doing in matching your practice with your position? You are a “saint,” that is, “someone consecrated to God.” Are you living up to that designation? Could it be said of you that you are “faithful brother” as well as a saint?
- A proper view of Christ is the antidote for heresy. Knowing the truth is a necessity if we are to be able to detect and reject error. Memorize Colossians 2:9-10 and Hebrews 1:3 so that you will have an answer for those who say that “Jesus may be a great teacher - but He wasn’t God.” Be ready with a biblical reply.
- Jesus Christ is God and He is Lord of All. A.W. Tozer: “God being who and what He is, and we being who and what we are, the only thinkable relation between us is one of full Lordship on His part and complete submission on our part. We owe Him every honor that is in our power to give Him. Our everlasting grief lies in giving Him anything less ... I speak of a voluntary exalting of God to His proper station over us and a willing surrender of our whole being to the place of worshipful submission...”

Is He Lord in all areas of your life?

\*At Work?      \*In the Family?      \*At Church?      \*Personal life?

- Spirituality is not a matter of extra experiences or a legalistic lifestyle. Don’t be intimidated by anyone who might try and tell you so. When you have Christ, you have it all. The question you have to answer is, “Does Christ have all of me?”
- Spirituality is a matter of attitude and obedience. THAT is what God expects of us.
  - \*How does your attitude fit what is listed in 3:1-4?
  - \*Pick one negative vice listed in 3:5-11 that you need to put to death. Work on putting it to death.
  - \*Pick one positive virtue listed in 3:12-14 that you need to put on and work on putting it on.

**Sermon Notes**  
**“HIM”**  
Colossians 1

**BY HIM**

I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.  
(16a)

**FOR HIM**

II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE OWNER OF THE UNIVERSE.  
(16b)

**IN HIM**

III. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUSTAINER OF THE  
UNIVERSE. (17)

**THROUGH HIM**

IV. JESUS CHRIST IS THE RECONCILER OF MANKIND.  
(21-22a)

**BEFORE HIM**

V. JESUS CHRIST IS THE JUDGE OF MANKIND. (22b)

**PROCLAIM HIM**

VI. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR AND MODEL FOR MANKIND.  
(29)

*AS OUR LORD JESUS DESERVES OUR WORSHIP  
AND SUBMISSION: AS OUR SAVIOR JESUS DESERVES  
OUR SERVICE AND DEVOTION*

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**Application**

- In a chapter entitled “Restoring the Creator-Creature Relation” A.W. Tozer says that the fact that God is the Creator gives Him the right to pre-eminence. “Back of all, above all, before all is God; first in sequential order, above in rank and station, exalted in dignity and honor.” In making that a reality in your life, can you pray this prayer?

O God, be Thou exalted over my possessions. Nothing of earth’s treasures shall seem dear unto me if only Thou art glorified in my life. Be Thou exalted over my friendships. I am determined that Thou shalt be above all, though I must stand deserted and alone in the midst of the earth. Be Thou exalted above my comforts. Though it mean the loss of bodily comforts and the carrying of heavy crosses I shall keep my vow this day before Thee. Be Thou exalted over my reputation. Make me ambitious to please Thee even if as a result I must sink into obscurity and my name be forgotten as a dream. Rise, O Lord, into Thy proper place of honor, above my ambitions, above my likes and dislikes, above my family, my health and even my life itself. Let me decrease that Thou mayest increase, let me sink that Thou mayest rise above. Ride forth upon me as Thou didst ride into Jerusalem mounted upon the humble little beast, a colt, the foal of an ass, and let me hear the children cry to Thee, “Hosanna in the highest.”

- That Christ holds the universe together demonstrates His absolute control over His creation. Knowing that He is in control of everything should give us:
  - \* Confidence - to face difficult tasks and circumstances.
  - \* Comfort - since we know He cares for us and will only allow things to happen for our ultimate good.
  - \* Contentment - with what He has provided.

**Sermon Notes**  
**“THE GROWTH OF THE GOSPEL”**  
Colossians 1:3-9

I. GOSPEL TRUTH IS THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD’S GRACE.

- A. Gospel means “good news.”
- B. The gospel is the truth of God.
- C. The gospel is the grace of God.

II. GOSPEL TRUTH SHOULD PRODUCE CHARACTER FRUIT IN US.

- A. The first fruit of the gospel is faith.
- B. The visible fruit of the gospel is love.
- C. The motivating fruit of the gospel is hope.

III. GOSPEL TRUTH SHOULD PRODUCE CONVERSION GROWTH THROUGH US.

- A. The truth of the gospel reaches the world.
- B. The truth of the gospel is reported by men.

*GOSPEL TRUTH SHOULD PRODUCE  
CHARACTER FRUIT IN US  
AND CONVERSION GROWTH THROUGH US*

**Application**

- The first (and most important) question that you must come to grips with is, “Have I put my complete trust in Jesus Christ?” Have I believed the gospel? If you need to make that decision, please mention it to me or someone so that we can have the joy of leading you to faith in Christ.
- Has the seed of the gospel “died” or “produced fruit” in you? Do you have an active faith? Do you demonstrate the visible fruit of love? Is your love “selective?” Why not plan to do something for someone who is not on your “favorite people” list and then do it quietly and sincerely. How much time do you spend thinking about our future blessings. Why not do a concordance study on “hope” this week? Look up several verses on hope and rejoice in the fact that we are given sure and certain promises. You could also review the Bible study notes on “Hope” which we studied earlier.
- Get in touch with the world. Write a letter to a missionary and encourage he/she in their work in that portion of the world. Ask them to write you and tell you of the progress that the gospel is making there. Rejoice in the fact that the gospel that you believe is a part of a world-wide effort to bring glory to God.
- Who needs to “learn the gospel” from you? Make a list and begin praying for them. Prey that God will give you the opportunity to share the “good news” with them. Write out your personally testimony so you can be prepared to share.

“Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves.  
Do what it says.”  
JAMES 1:22



**Sermon Notes**  
**"THE TREE OF**  
**CHRISTIAN**  
**LIFE"**  
Colossians 19-14



**THE ROOT-Knowledge**

- I. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL IS REQUIRED IF WE ARE TO PLEASE GOD. (vs. 9)

**THE TRUNK-A Worthy Walk**

- II. LIVES WORTHY OF AND PLEASING TO GOD GROW FROM BEING CONTROLLED BY GOD'S WILL. (vs. 10a)

**THE FRUIT-Growth, Patience, Thanksgiving**

- III. WE PLEASE GOD WHEN WE GROW IN DEEDS AND KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE PATIENCE AND EXPRESS THANKS. (vss. 10b-14 )

*KNOWLEDGE IS THE ROOT  
OF THE PLEASING FRUIT  
OF GROWTH, PATIENCE AND THANKSGIVING*

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**Application**

- When was the last time you thanked God for someone's spiritual growth? Commit yourself to pray for another Christian who is "doing well." Pray that God will continue to work in their life.
- What is the controlling influence in your life? Do you spend more time each day watching TV and reading secular books, magazines and newspapers than you do studying and reading God's Word and learning His standards for living? If so, whose standards are you more likely to be influenced by - the world's or God's? Make it your priority to know God's Word.
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate yourself in the area of thankfulness? Take a few minutes and write down as many things as you can think of for which you are thankful. Now, In prayer, thank God for each of the things you have written down. In order to help you In this area, memorize I Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God In Christ Jesus concerning you."
- Make it a point to evaluate yourself Friday on how "worthy" your walk has been in the areas of Growth, Patience and Thanksgiving.

"Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves.  
Do what it says."  
JAMES 1:22



**Sermon Notes**  
**“THE CHRIST HYMN”**  
**CHRIST THE SUPREME LORD**  
Colossians 1:15-20

I. JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OVER THE FIRST CREATION.  
(15-17)

II. JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OVER THE NEW CREATION.  
(19-20)

III. \_\_\_\_\_

*JESUS CHRIST, THE SUPREME LORD  
OVER ALL CREATION AND THE CHURCH  
SHOULD HAVE FIRST PLACE IN EVERY AREA  
OF OUR LIFE*

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**Application**

But, there remains an important practical question: Will the new creation respond to its Head as the old creation faithfully and unfailingly responds to its Creator and Sustainer? When He arose and rebuked the wind and the sea, the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. The Lord of the billows spoke, and the wet fury suddenly became glassy stillness. Creation acknowledged the Lordship of Christ. While we sturdily affirm our belief that He is pre-eminent in all things, is He really pre-eminent in our lives IN ME? Or, to put it in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, **“BUT WHAT DOES IT HELP THEE NOW THAT THOU BELIEVEST ALL THIS?”**

“Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves.  
Do what it says.”  
JAMES 1:22

**Sermon Notes**  
**RECONCILED TO GOD**  
Colossians 1:21-23

Justification-

Redemption-

Forgiveness-

Reconciliation-

Adoption -

I. AN UNSAVED PERSON IS AN ALIENATED ENEMY TO GOD. (v. 21)

II. A SAVED PERSON HAS A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST'S SACRIFICIAL DEATH. (v. 22)

III. A SAVED PERSON WILL STAND BEFORE GOD MORALLY HOLY AND LEGALLY BLAMELESS BY REMAINING FAITHFUL. (vs. 22-23)

*THE DEATH OF CHRIST MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR GOD'S  
ENEMY TO BECOME GOD'S FRIEND*

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**Application**

**FOR UNBELIEVERS**

- YOU CAN APPROPRIATE THIS GOOD NEWS PERSONALLY AND MOVE FROM ENEMY TO FRIEND. How does a person appropriate the good news of the gospel and become saved?
  1. Recognize your sinful condition. (Rom. 3:23)
  2. Recognize that the penalty of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)
  3. Recognize that Christ died for your sin. (Rom. 5:8)
  4. Trust Christ and ask God to save you. (Rom. 10:9,10)

**FOR BELIEVERS**

- ROMANS 5:9-14. This passage tells us that we should rejoice because we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. This week when the pressure hits take a few moments to reflect on the wonder of salvation. You, at one time were God's enemy, but now you are His child. Rejoice!! Can you think of anything better than that?
- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21. This passage tells us that God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation and has committed to us the message of reconciliation. How faithful are you to that ministry and to delivering that message? If the world is to be reconciled to God, it is up to us to tell them that God has done His part and has removed the sin barrier.
- EPHESIANS 2:14-18. This passage tells us that in creating the church, God reconciled two hostile peoples (Jew and Gentile) to one another. In the church, we have indeed been reconciled to God, but we should also be reconciled to one another. There should be no hostility in our personal relationships. Take the necessary steps to remove any barriers with another person.
- Are you living a life of continuing faithfulness so that you will not be ashamed when Christ appears? Are you allowing other things to influence you so that the truths of Christianity are not the controlling factors in your life? Spend some time thinking about the reality of standing before Christ!!

**Sermon Notes**  
**“DON’T BE DECEIVED”**  
Colossians 2:1-5

- I. DEFENDING AGAINST DECEPTION IS A DIFFICULT BUT NECESSARY TASK. (v. 1)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. DEFENSES AGAINST DECEPTION ARE UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING. (vs. 2-3)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- III. DECEPTION IS DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT IS CONVINCING. (v. 4)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- IV. DEFEATING DECEPTION IS REASON TO REJOICE. (v. 5)

*BELIEVERS WHO UNIFY IN LOVE AND  
UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH WON'T BE DECEIVED*

**Application**

- Ephesians 4:3 makes it clear that it is up to us to maintain the unity of the Spirit. This is done through the “bond of peace.” We can maintain unity by being PEACEMAKERS. Are you doing your part to maintain the unity of Fellowship Bible Church? Is there someone you need to make peace with? Are there two parties you need to bring together? Are you "making every effort" to see that unity is maintained? LOVE is another essential ingredient to unity. Do you have trouble loving someone in Fellowship Bible Church? Read I John 4 -7-5:3. This passage tells us that if we have a problem loving Christians then the real problem is our relationship with God. Spend a moment evaluating your love for God by evaluating your commitment to love for others.

PRACTICAL POINTS TO HELP YOU GUARD AGAINST DECEPTION

- **DON’T BE SPIRITUALLY NAIVE**

The Bible warns against accepting every teaching we hear just because someone says it's from God. “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.” (I Jn. 4:1) False teachers, we are cautioned, will run rampant in the last days. We must be discerning and alert to error.

- **LEARN THE SENSE OF SCRIPTURE**

Exposure to contemporary preachers, no matter how reliable, can never take the place of a personal, functional grasp of the Scriptures. This goes far beyond just memorizing isolated texts. Spend the time necessary - consistent, daily Bible reading and study - to gain an understanding of the Scriptures in context. This will give you a frame of reference to recognize when someone isolates a verse to make it mean something inconsistent with the total teaching of Scripture. Even if you are not able to quote chapter and verse, you will recognize questionable themes and have a base for more detailed examination. Develop an attitude that will not allow Scripture to be subordinate to other sources, written or spoken. Material should be evaluated, then accepted or rejected based on how it stands up when viewed through the Word.

**Sermon Notes**  
**CAPTIVE OR COMPLETE?**  
Colossians 2:6-10

- I. CHRISTIANS MUST CONTINUALLY LIVE UNDER THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST. (vs. 6,7)
- II. CHRISTIANS MUST CONSTANTLY BEWARE OF BEING LED AWAY FROM CHRIST. (v. 8)
- III. CHRISTIANS MUST COMPREHEND THEIR SPIRITUAL COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST. (vs. 9, 10)

*CHRISTIANS MUST LIVE UNDER CHRIST'S LORDSHIP,  
REJECT THE PHILOSOPHIES OF MEN  
AND RECOGNIZE THEIR FULLNESS IN CHRIST*

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**Application**

- Where are YOU in the growing and learning process? Are you learning your way through God's book? Is doctrine important to you? Or do you think of it as dull, irrelevant stuff? Are you "established but stuck?" Picture in your mind a friend or relative who is younger in the faith than you. Perhaps they are still wrestling with some of the basics of belief in Christ. Imagine they are confronted by a deceptive false teacher. Your friend looks to you for help. Is your grip on Bible knowledge strong enough to help your friend cope? Could you point him/her in the right direction? Write that person's name down on a piece of paper and use it as a bookmark. Use it to remind yourself of your need to be continually established in the faith - for your sake and the sake of someone else. Commit yourself to a regular study of God's Word. An excellent book to help guide you would be: A Survey of Bible Doctrine by Charles C. Ryrie (Moody Press, 1972).
- Is thanksgiving in your life similar to a river overflowing its banks, or is it more like a shallow trickle? Why not write down five different things you can be thankful for each day of this week. Acknowledge God's goodness and thank Him for His work in your life.
- Have you trusted Christ to be your personal savior and make you the complete person you can be? If you haven't I would be glad to talk with you about this most important decision. Feel free to talk to me personally or call me at 586-6520 or 586-1201.
- Christian, do you need to remind yourself of your spiritual completeness in Christ? Memorize Colossians 2:9,10; John 1:16; 2 Peter 1:3.

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and so deceive yourselves.  
Do what it says."  
JAMES 1:22

**Sermon Notes**  
**COMPLETE IN CHRIST**  
Colossians 2:1-15

I. SPIRITUAL FULLNESS MEANS COMPLETE SALVATION.  
(vs. 11,12)

II. SPIRITUAL FULLNESS MEANS COMPLETE FORGIVENESS.  
(vs. 13, 14)

III. SPIRITUAL FULLNESS MEANS COMPLETE VICTORY. (v. 15)

*IN CHRIST WE HAVE COMPLETE SALVATION, TOTAL  
FORGIVENESS, AND ABSOLUTE VICTORY*

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**Application**

- Colossians 2:11 and Romans 6:1-18 make it clear that when we got saved, our “old man” or our sin-dominated nature was rendered inoperative because it was put to death through our identification with the death of Christ. As a result, we are no longer slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6) and we should not allow sin to dominate our lives (Rom. 6:12). We don’t have to sin because we have been given the power to resist through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1-17). This week, study the great truths in Romans 6 and 8.

Are you allowing yourself to be controlled by the Holy Spirit - or does your flesh have the reigns of your life?

Since sin expresses itself through the members of our body, take time to present the members of your body to God as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:13,14). Do it as a private ceremony in order to make it memorable.  
Begin living like you are saved.

- Are you so certain and appreciative of God’s forgiveness that you tell others that they can be forgiven if they come to Christ? Are you trying to grow so that you reflect God’s forgiveness in your relationships with others? Are you motivated to forgive others based on God’s forgiveness of you? Memorize Ephesians 3:2 and make that the goal of your relationships.

- 1 John 3:8 tells us that, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” Satan was defeated at the cross and we share in that victory as Christians. Satan is the great Deceiver (Rev. 12:9) but we do not need to be deceived because we have the Holy Spirit as our guide (1 John 2:26,27); Satan is the Accuser (Rev. 12:10) but we need not fear that because Jesus Christ is our Advocate (1 John 2:1,2); Satan is the Tempter (Matt. 4:3) but we have the power to resist through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-17). Memorize 1 John 4:4.

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JAMES 1:22

**Sermon Notes**  
**TRUE SPIRITUALITY**  
Colossians 2:16-23

I. SPIRITUAL FULLNESS MAKES LEGALISM  
UNNECESSARY AND UNIMPORTANT. (16, 17)

II. SPIRITUAL FULLNESS MAKES MYSTICISM A  
NEEDLESS OBSTACLE TO GROWTH. (18, 19)

III. SPIRITUAL FULLNESS MAKES ASCETICISM  
NONESSENTIAL AND USELESS. (20-23)

***SPIRITUALITY IS NOT RULES  
OR EXPERIENCES BUT A  
RELATIONSHIP WITH AND OBEDIENCE  
TO JESUS CHRIST***

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**Application**

- If you tend toward legalism in any form, STOP IT! If you are the kind of person who looks down on others (all the while thinking how impressed God must be to have you on His team) because others don't fit your code, then you are a legalist. Stop evaluating other people according to a set of prescribed rules. Contemporary examples might be "movies"; "music"; "attire." Why not sit down and add some things to the list. Now determine not to judge others on the basis of the list. Some time this week read Mark 7:1-23 and Romans 14. Since Christ (and not codes) is the true reality of spiritual experience, it is senseless to look for fulfillment or growth in regulations rather than a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. In what way are you growing in that relationship?
- Our society is experiencing a renewed interest in "spirituality" and there is an accompanying thirst for "experiences." T.M., yoga, trance channeling, past life recall, contact with U.F.O.'s, out of body experiences are some pagan examples of spiritual "arrival." Even in the church we can be led to believe that we are just average, run-of-the-mill, normal Christians if we haven't had a vision or an ecstatic experience, or met an angel or gone to heaven and come back. You do not need to be intimidated by any of these things - you have been given fullness in Jesus Christ. Write down Col. 2:9,10 on a card and put it in a place where you will see it easily. Remind yourself of your spiritual completeness every day this week.
- Concerning spirituality, Barry Seagren has written, "Attitudes and behavior; trust and obedience. This is spirituality ... Often we do not like to hear this. Behavior and Obedience is dreary stuff indeed. We would much rather seek a spirituality which is more "spiritual" in the modern sense of the term. Yet the dreary topic of obedience, or the cultivation of Christian character, is precisely where the Bible puts its emphasis. Galatians 5:22-33 has always been an important passage to me. It tells us that what the Spirit longs to produce in us is not experiences, not gifts, but character, behavior, obedience, conformity to the image of God."

**Sermon Notes**  
“NEW LIFE PM THE NEW LIFE”  
Colossians 3:1-4

**THE PAULINE PATTERN:**

Doctrine > Duty  
Position > Practice

- I. OUR NEW LIFE SHOULD GIVE US A NEW MOTIVE AND A NEW MIND. (vs. 1,2)
  
- II. WE SHOULD LIVE A NEW LIFE BECAUSE WE ARE DEAD TO THE OLD LIFE. (past) (vs. 3a)
  
- III. WE SHOULD LIVE A NEW LIFE BECAUSE OUR LIFE IS CONCEALED AND SECURE IN CHRIST. (present) (vs. 3b)
  
- IV. WE SHOULD LIVE A NEW LIFE BECAUSE OUR LIFE WHICH IS CONCEALED WILL BE REVEALED. (future) (vs. 4)

*THE RISEN LIFE IS CONTINUALLY THINKING  
AND ACTIVELY PURSUING  
A HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE*

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**Application**

- What are the three things you are currently seeking the most? What are the three things you love the most? What are the three things you think about the most? What do you read? What do you watch? What do you daydream about? ponder? Based on your answers, what is your preoccupation, God or self? What should your preoccupation be? If your preoccupation has been yourself, why is that? If your preoccupation has been yourself, then you need to make the commitment today to concentrate on Christ. Read Philippians 3:8-14. What was the goal of Paul's life? Will you make that the goal of your life?
  
- Christian living is more than just "avoiding the bad." It is also pursuing the good. If we would actively pursue the things above, there would be "no room" and no time for the "things of earth." Isolate a problem area in your life and develop a creative way to replace a bad activity /attitude with a good activity /attitude.
  
- If you've never truly realized that your identification with Christ and His cross have made you dead to sin and dead to the world, then read Romans 6:1-18 and Galatians 6:14. Make some observations on the text - write them down. Ponder and meditate on the truths of these passages. Write down your impressions. Memorize key verses.
  
- There is only one spiritual experience yet to come - when the Lord comes and glorification takes place. Don't look for anything in between. LIVE NOW on the basis of your identity with Christ and look forward to the return of the Lord when He and we will be gloriously revealed to the world.

“Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves.  
Do what it says.”  
JAMES 1:22

**Sermon Notes**  
**“GOOD RIDDANCE”**  
Colossians 3:5-11

- I. SINCE WE'RE NOT PAGANS WE MUST PUT AN ABSOLUTE END TO PERVERTED LUST. (vs. 5-7)

- II. MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MUST RID THEMSELVES OF A SINFUL. TEMPER AND TONGUE. (vs. 8-11)

*A CHANGE IN CITIZENSHIP MUST  
CHANGE OUR CONDUCT*

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**Application**

FIRST-STOP MAKING EXCUSES AND RATIONALIZATIONS! and determine to deal with any of these sins where you have a problem. God has not commanded us to do something we are incapable of doing. He has provided us with the Holy Spirit and through His power we can put an end to and rid ourselves of evil practices (Rom. 8:13). Swindoll says, “Saying no is something all of us who belong to Christ can do. There’s nothing magical about it. You simply put Christ at the helm of your life and say NO!”

- DEALING WITH LUST

Are you a Christian who has started to slip morally? Will you be man or woman enough to deal with it? Completely ?

1). Counteract temptation. Don’t tolerate it. Avoid the things that make you weak. Is a television show? certain movies? magazines? a person? We are told to “flee” fornication, not to flirt with it. You are a fool if you know what weakens you and you feed on it anyway. Read Genesis 39. What did Joseph do?

2). Remind yourself that the final pain will soon erase the temporary pleasure.

3). Control your thought life by saturating your mind with God's Word.

- DEALING WITH COVETOUSNESS

The way to conquer covetousness is through contentedness. Memorize Philippians 4:11. Learn to say to God, “Thank you, God, for all You have given me. I don’t want anything else.”

- DEALING WITH THE TEMPER

1). Cultivate honesty in communication. Don’t let anger build up. Obey the Bible and resolve anger quickly (Ephesians 4:26).

2). Get all the facts before you react or form a strong opinion.

3). Learn to ignore petty things. Don’t look for a fight – that’s immaturity in action. Don’t be defensive. It is to your glory to overlook an offense (Proverbs 19:11).

4). If you feel rage coming on, remove yourself from the immediate situation. Take a walk or do something active. Pray and ask God to calm you down.

- DEALING WITH THE TONGUE

What would people conclude from listening to your speech? Conversational cursing is not appropriate for a Christian.

1). Think first. Before your lips start moving, mentally preview your words. Are they kind or cutting? wholesome or vile?

2). Talk less.

3). START TODAY!



**Sermon Notes**  
**“PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST”**  
Colossians 3:12-17

- I. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MUST PRACTICE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRIST. (vs. 12-14)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MUST MAINTAIN THE PEACE OF CHRIST. (vs. 15).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- III. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MUST LEARN AND LIVE THE WORD OF CHRIST. (vs. 16)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- IV. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY MUST HONOR THE NAME OF CHRIST. (vs. 17)

*THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY  
MUST DISPLAY CHRISTLIKE CHARACTERISTICS*

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**Application**

- GET STARTED AND MAKE AN EFFORT. These virtues are to be adopted and cultivated. C.S. Lewis says that we are ordered to “dress up as Christ” and though it may seem like pretense, it is in fact what we are ordered to do. He writes, “But there is also a good kind (of pretending), where the pretense leads up to the real thing. When you are not feeling particularly friendly but know you ought to be, the best thing you can do, very often, is to put on a friendly manner and behave as if you were a nicer person than you actually are. And in a few minutes as we have all noticed, you will be feeling friendlier than you were. Very often the only way to get a quality in reality is to start behaving as if you had it already”.
- Recognize that true compassion goes beyond warm, sentimental feelings - it takes action to meet a need. Read 1 John 3:16-19. When you see a need, ask yourself, “What can I do concretely to help?” Seek opportunities. Go to those who know of needs and find out what you can do. Volunteer.
- If you are guilty of pride and comparison, then recognize it as a gross sin. Memorize Romans 12:3 this week. STOP comparing yourself to other people and ask yourself how you measure up in reflecting the character of Christ. (That should take care of the problem of pride).
- Think of someone you admire for having a patient spirit. Ask that person for advice on how they have developed that virtue.
- Think of all the things God tolerates with you. Think of all the things others tolerate with you. Learn to tolerate other people by reminding yourself of your own imperfections. Focus on God's forgiveness of you when you need to forgive someone else. Who do you need to forgive? Spouse? Parent? Child? Pastor? Fellow Church Member? Someone at Work? at School? DO IT.
- Within the church of Christ, when there are inter-personal problems, begin letting peace within the body be the deciding factor. Reflect on what God says in I Cor. 3:1-3, 16,17.
- How “comfortable” is the Word of Christ in your life? How are you Learning it?  
How much time and effort are you expending in Living it?
- Remind yourself daily that EVERYTHING you do or say either enhances or defames the reputation of Jesus Christ.

**Sermon Notes**  
**“THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IN THE HOME”**  
Colossians 3:18-21

- I. VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION IS APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR FOR CHRISTIAN WIVES. (v. 18)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. SACRIFICIAL LOVE AND NOT HARSHNESS IS THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN HUSBANDS. (v. 19)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- III. OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS PLEASES GOD AND IS THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN CHILDREN. (v. 20)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- IV. PARENTS (ESPECIALLY FATHERS) ARE NOT TO DISCOURAGE THEIR CHILDREN BY PROVOKING THEM. (v. 21)

**THE PILLARS WHICH SUPPORT A CHRISTIAN HOME**  
**ARE LOVING LEADERSHIP AND RESPECT FOR**  
**AUTHORITY**

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**WIVES** – If voluntary submission is a problem for you, remind yourself that this is God's order and plan. Submission to your husband is in fact obedience to God and is Christlikeness in action. Is there someone who has impressed you with displaying a submissive spirit? Contact her and ask her what she has done to develop that attitude. When a difference arises between yourself and your husband don't be afraid to offer input regarding a decision, but be willing to allow the final decision to rest on his shoulders. If it fails, don't constantly remind him with an "I told you so" attitude. Isolate the areas where submission is a problem. Talk about it with you husband and assure him that you want to improve in that area. Communicate with each other on how gains can be made.

**HUSBANDS** – Ephesians 5:23-33 gives the pattern for loving our wives. If we aren't loving them like Christ loves the church (sacrificially and devotedly) then we are not fulfilling our role as a loving leader. In what ways do you practically show your wife that you are seeking her best interest: spiritually, mentally, physically? Are you helping her grow in these areas? 1 Corinthians 13 describes what real love acts like. Read that chapter and replace "love" with your name and determine whether or not this accurately describes your action toward your wife. Purchase and read some good books to help improve your marriage. Here are some suggestions: Love Life by Ed Wheat (Zondervan, 1980); Strike the Original Match by Charles Swindoll (Multnomah Press, 1980); What Wives Wished Their Husbands Knew About Women; by James Dobson (Tyndale House Publishers, 1975). Are you harsh with your wife? Remind yourself that harshness is distasteful in any leader, much less a leader who is specifically charged to love.

**CHILDREN** – The command in the Bible to you is simply to obey your parents. Read Proverbs 30:11-17, Romans 1:28-32, 2 Tim. 3:1-5 and see what God thinks of disobedience. Look at Ephesians 6:1-3 and remember that it is to your advantage to obey your parents. You should also bear in mind that you owe your very existence and livelihood to your parents. They deserve your obedience and God demands it. Think of a friend at school that you dislike because they are always taking advantage of people. Don't be guilty of treating your parents this way. Remember your parents love you and they really do have feeling which can be hurt. If you've been disobedient, ask God and your folks to forgive you. Improve!

**FATHERS** – Are you guilty of "turning the reins over" to your wife regarding family discipline and development? As the leader in the home you have that responsibility. If you feel unequipped for the job, then get some help. Read Heaven Help the Home by Howard Hendricks (Victor Books, 1973) or The Measure of a Family by Gene Getz (G/L Publication, 1976). Sit down with your family and discuss family goals and policies. How would you evaluate your discipline of your children? Severe? Inconsistent? In anger? \_\_\_\_\_? If there is a problem, talk with you family about it and work on improving. After all it's only your family that is at stake.

## **How to Irritate Your Kids**

### **1. OVERPROTECTION -**

Don't trust them. Give them nothing but rules. You can promote rebellion by not trusting them.

### **2. FAVORITISM -**

You can irritate them by constantly comparing them with the other children in the family. "Why can't you be like ...?" is a poor thing for parents to say to their kids.

### **3. DEPRECIATION -**

Depreciate his worth. This is done by communicating to the child that he is better "seen and not heard."

### **4. DISCOURAGEMENT -**

Never reward him for anything. Make sure he never feels like he succeeded. Make him think his efforts are "never enough" or "never good enough."

### **5. A LACK OF DEMONSTRATED AFFECTION -**

Don't go out of your way to love them, hug them, kiss them, play with them etc.

### **6. NOT PROVIDING NEEDS -**

Don't provide them with privacy, a place to play clean clothes, good meals.

### **7. LACK OF STANDARDS -**

Don't give them any rules. (When they are left totally on their own they can't handle it).

### **8. CRITICISM -**

Always put them down and belittle them and their efforts. This will teach him to always and others and always

### **9. NEGLECT -**

Be indifferent, ignore them, don't play with them. Make them wonder if they really matter.

### **10. OVERDISCIPLINE -**

Scream and yell all the time. Shut them up in their room for excessive periods of time for minor offenses. Use your superior physical strength to physically hurt them. Discipline them in anger and show them that you can't control yourself.

**Sermon Notes**  
**"THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AT WORK"**  
Colossians 4:22-41

- I. CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES MUST WORK WITH INTEGRITY AND REVERENCE FOR CHRIST. (v. 22)
- II. CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES MUST WORK HARD FOR CHRIST WHO WILL IMPARTIALLY REWARD OR PUNISH. (vs. 23-25)
- III. CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS MUST TREAT THEIR EMPLOYEES FAIRLY AND REMEMBER THEIR ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHRIST. (v. 4:1)

**WORK BECOMES WORSHIP**  
**WHEN IT IS DONE FOR CHRIST**  
**WITH INDUSTRY AND INTEGRITY**

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**Application**

- SUGGESTIONS FOR WORKING WITH A HARSH EMPLOYER
  - 1). Reflect on 1 Peter 2:18-20.
  - 2). First, look at your own work as objectively as possible. Listen to criticism. Do you need to make improvements?
  - 3). Before you talk to your boss, examine your motives. Do you have a genuine concern for your boss and your working relationship, or do you just want to vent anger and frustration?
  - 4). Pray. Unload your frustration on the Lord and pray for your boss.
  - 5). When you talk to your boss: Be specific. Focus on the issue. Do it in a spirit of love. Assure him/her of your desire to please. Ask for clarification of expectations.
  - 6). If nothing improves, learn to derive pleasure from a job well-done. Shift your focus and see Christ as your boss.
  - 7). If all else fails, you may need to change jobs. (But don't quit until you have tried to make it work)
- Do something extra this week that no one will notice.
- Learn to gain fulfillment from doing excellent work even if it is not noticed or rewarded. This can be done in all areas of life:
  - \* Schoolwork   \* Project at home   \* Occupation   \* Housework
- A WORD TO HOUSEWIVES/HOMEMAKERS

Don't let yourself be influenced by the common belief that the value of work is based on salary level. Your job has great worth and value. Your work is important. Supporting and encouraging productive human beings is a satisfying occupation. Few working people have the opportunity to see others reach their fulfillment as human beings through their efforts.

If you've grown stagnant, here are a few suggestions: \* Schedule your time. Get organized. \* Develop some creative interests and hobbies. \* Develop a ministry. Use your time and home as a base.
- View your work as a platform for ministry. Remember that the workplace is possibly the only place non-Christians may see genuine Christianity in action. Every day, on your way to work, remind yourself that this is your opportunity to be an ambassador for Christ.
- Read Your Job: Survival or Satisfaction? by Jerry and Mary White (Zondervan: 1977) or Secular Work is Full-Time Service by Larry Peabody (Christian Literature Crusade: 1974)

**Sermon Notes**  
“TALKING TO GOD AND UNBELIEVERS”  
Colossians 4:2-6

- I. BELIEVERS SHOULD MAKE PRAYER A PERSISTENT PRIORITY. (v. 2)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- II. EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM REQUIRES PRAYER FOR OPPORTUNITIES. (vs. 3-4)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- III. EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM REQUIRES ADVISE AND OPPORTUNISTIC WALK. (v. 5)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- IV. EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM REQUIRES WHOLESOME AND INTERESTING TALK. (v. 6)

*WINNING THE WORLD REQUIRES  
PRAYERFUL CHRISTIANS WHO  
SEEK AND SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES INSPIRED BY  
THEIR WISE WALK AND WINSOME TALK*

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**Application**

- If you had to choose a word to describe your prayer life, what word would you choose?  
CONVINCED of the necessity, but not active?  
CONSISTENT or infrequent?  
COMMITTED to daily prayer as a priority?  
If you want to make personal prayer a priority in your life, then decide on a personal plan. WHEN do you plan to do it? WHAT do you need to drop so that you can do it (Sleep, T.V. etc)? WHO can you pray with, or get to hold you in accountability? Get a "prayer partner" if it will help
  
- During the coming week PRAY that you will be sensitive to at least one opportunity to share the gospel. THINK about what you want to communicate ahead of time. When the opportunity comes, SPEAK graciously and clearly. Be ready to ASK the person if he or she would like to receive the gift of eternal life. Finally, be willing to SHARE your experience with another supportive Christian.
  
- How familiar are you with the essential elements of the gospel? If you had an opportunity to witness for Christ, could you ACCURATELY and CLEARLY explain to someone, how they could be saved? If so, then seek and seize opportunities to do so. If not, then that is a crucial area for you to be equipped in. Communicate your desire to be trained to present the gospel.

“Do not merely listen to the word,  
and so deceive yourselves.  
Do what it says.”  
JAMES 1:22

**Sermon Notes**  
**“REAL PEOPLE”**  
Colossians 4:7-18

CHRISTIANS SHARING LIVES - vs. 7-9)

I. BELIEVERS WHO STAY FAITHFUL ARE A SOURCE OF GRATITUDE. (vs. 7-11, 14a)

Tychichus - (faithful servant)

Onesimus - (converted slave)

Aristarchus - (devoted companion)

Mark - (recovered friend)

Jesus Justus - (unsung hero)

Luke - (talented specialist)

II. BELIEVERS WHO PRAY FERVENTLY ARE ESSENTIAL TO GROWTH. (vs. 12-13)

Epaphras - (prayer warrior)

III. BELIEVERS WHO STRAY FROM THE FAITH ARE A SOURCE OF GRIEF. (v. 14b)

Demas - (worldly defector)

CHURCHES SHARING LETTERS – (vs. 15-17)

CHAINS AND GRACE – (v. 18)

GOD’S WORK NEEDS  
FAITHFUL AND DIVERSE MINISTRY

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**Application**

- Which one of these personalities do you identify with?  
Tychichus - are you currently involved in a ministry, that you need to stay faithful to?  
Onesimus - Are you certain that you know Christ as your Savior? Has that radically changed your lifestyle? Make a list of how God has changed your life - personal relationships (wife/husband, children, friends, etc.); your speech; personal integrity (remember it's tax time).  
Aristarchus - Can you think of someone in this body that you will stand by through “thick and thin”? Do you have a spirit of committed devotion, or do you disappear when the going gets tough.  
Mark - Maybe you’ve failed in a relationship or an area of ministry. Maybe you've made mistakes others are aware of. Are you willing to put past failures behind you and pick yourself up and look to the present and future and anticipate success.  
Jesus Justus - Are you content to be an “unnoticed necessity” or do you crave attention? Are you not satisfied until others notice you? Does it bother you when others succeed and receive praise?  
Luke - Do you have a true understanding of your gifts and abilities? If not, are you trying to find out? If so, are you placing them at the disposal of Jesus Christ? Epaphras - Praying for people’s spiritual welfare is often overlooked in our prayer times. MacArthur said, “Somewhere along the line we've got to get past praying for broken legs and bodily diseases and get to praying for what really matters. It's fine to pray for physical things, but sometimes that's an excuse for not really laboring about people's spiritual welfare.”  
Demas - Demas had a good start but the pull of the world was too strong for him. Do you find yourself real “fired up” about serving God on Sunday morning but by Tuesday afternoon have you forgotten to even talk to him? That may be an indication that the world has its hook in you.
- Are you thankful and appreciative of the different, gifts, abilities and personalities God has placed in our body? Do you recognize that God works differently with each of us, or do you think everyone needs to be like you? All these different people made up the “Pauline Evangelistic Association” - They worked as a team and needed each other. Recognize we need each other too.

# Colossians

## (A Prison Epistle)

**Theme:** The Preeminence of Jesus Christ

**Author:** The Apostle Paul (1:1)

**Bearer of the Letter:** Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9)

**Written from:** Rome

**Written to:** The Church at Colosse (1:2)

**Date of Writing:** c. A.D. 60 – 63

**Occasion:** Arrival of Epaphras with the news about heretical teaching at Colosse (1:7-8). Apparently the heresy was a blending of Judaism and incipient Gnosticism.

**Key Verses:** 1:27; 2:10

# Colossians

## (Christ is Everything)

Personal	Greetings to the Saints (1:1-2)		Greeting
	Thankful for the Growth of the Gospel of Grace (1:3-8)		Prayer
Doctrinal	Paul’s Prayer for a Worthy Walk (1:9-12)		Body
	The Lordship of Jesus Christ (1:13-20)		
	Christ the Reconciler (1:21-23)		
	Christ in You: The Hope of Glory (1:24-29)		
Polemical	Christ: God’s Treasure house (2:1-5)		
	Christ: The Fullness of God in a Body (2:6-15)		
	Christ the Reality Should Result in Rejecting Regulations (2:16-23)		
Practical	Hearts and Minds Seated Above with Christ our Life (3:1-4)		
	Christ is All so Sinful Practices Must Fall (3:5-11)		
	The Well-Dressed Christian (3:12-17)		
	Christian Relationships (3:18-4:1)		
Personal	Prayer and Proclamation (4:2-6)		Closing
	Farewells from Faithful Friends (4:7-18)		

### Key Verse:

**“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.” (Col. 2:9-10)**



# Introduction to Colossians

## I. Authorship

This book is one of the four prison letters of Paul (along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon) and was unanimously affirmed as authentic by the early church.

Church tradition is in agreement with the epistle's claim of Pauline authorship (Col. 1:1, 23).

Citations by the Church Fathers begins with Irenaeus. The letter was assumed as Pauline until 1838 when critical scholars argued for dependence on Ephesians (which was also rejected as being authentically Pauline) and alleged non-Pauline ideas.

Various views of authorship include:

1. A second century Gnostic work—F. C. Baur.
2. A shorter and genuine Colossians worked over with an anti-Gnostic polemic by a later author—Holtzmann.
3. Genuine with some later interpolations—P.N. Harrison.
4. A non-Pauline work of the Pauline school—Lohse, Schweizer, and many others (Koester).
5. Genuinely Pauline—Bruce, Moule, Guthrie, O'Brien, Martin.

Issues of Authenticity have been discussed under:

1. The language and style of the book

Concerning vocabulary and sentence structure, there are 36 Pauline *hapax legomena* (words with a one-time occurrence), excluding Ephesians and the Pastorals (which many reject), several cumbersome sentences, and the omission of key Pauline concepts.

In reply the following can be noted: the cumbersome style may result from the use of worship materials and the polemical context; the omission of key concepts is not significant since a unique heresy with a Christological problem is present; the *hapax* words are mostly in the traditional material or are compound words that in their simple form do appear in Paul. (Even Galatians has 31

Pauline *hapax* and no one questions it.) Further, various Pauline stylistic characteristics do appear in the letter—the indicative-imperative letter structure and the use of the phrase “in Christ.”

Conclusion: Language and style are not a decisive argument against authenticity. Even Lohse, who denies Pauline authorship, acknowledges this is so.

2. Theological ideas: esp. Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and the authority of tradition

This is a key area of debate.

- a. It is argued that the form of the Gnostic heresy is too late for Paul. (This is an older argument and depends on the heresy being regarded as significantly Gnostic and a developed Gnosticism, which is unlikely. An emphasis on knowledge is possible this early [see 1 Cor. 1:18-3:5] without full-blown Gnosticism being present).
- b. The expression of Pauline Christology differs from Colossians’ Christology. Colossian Christology is cosmic (universal) and comprehensive versus Pauline Christology, which is legal and soteriological. (But cosmic Christology is present elsewhere in Paul: 1 Cor. 2:8, 8:6; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 4:3, 9; Phil. 2:10; Rom. 9:5).
- c. The expression of Pauline ecclesiology differs from Colossians’ ecclesiology. Colossian ecclesiology is universal versus Pauline ecclesiology that is local. Particularly, Christ as head of the body (1:18), is unique. (The cosmic character of ecclesiology and especially Christology is much like the early chapters of the book of Acts, and in its traditional forms it shows that these concepts were available to Paul. Christ as head of the body also has precedents in Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 1:13; 12:12, 14; Gal. 3:28).
- d. The expressions of Pauline eschatology differs from Colossians’ eschatology. Colossian eschatology is expressed in present terms and is more cosmic than Pauline eschatology, which is more future looking

and more imminent in emphasis. This emphasis is largely absent in Colossians. An example of this eschatology is Colossians' treatment of hope. (But this idea of "hope" is found in Rom. 5:1-3, 8:24 and Phil. 3:21. Christ as "mystery" is found in 1 Cor. 2:7, 10. Raised with Christ is found in Rom. 6:8.

Imminence is a characteristic mainly of the Thessalonian epistles, though it is mentioned elsewhere in Paul. But the issue in this heresy was not its eschatology, but the way it took present attention away from Christ in realized knowledge, so a present eschatology was needed to deal with it.)

- e. The letter shows excessive dependence on tradition and on apostolic authority, which is unlike Paul. The author uses his opponent's terms rather than rejecting them. He uses tradition without giving Pauline exposition to it as is his style. (Paul is capable of using traditional material without comment: Rom. 1:3-4, Phil. 2:5-11. Paul's focus on his ministry has adequate antecedents in Gal. 1:12-22 and 2 Corinthians. Also, this church was not founded by an apostle, so apostolic endorsement of its message would be important, much like Romans, with its introduction to Paul through an authoritative introduction of the Gospel.)
- f. Treatment of baptism is more comprehensive in Colossians than in Paul (1 Cor. 12:13, Rom. 6:3-5, and Phil. 1:20-21 all have concepts that are parallel to the Colossian ideas).

### 3. Colossians relationship to both Ephesians and Philemon

It is generally regarded that Colossians preceded Ephesians. This is because within the parallelism between the two letters (which are quite extensive), Ephesians is more expanded and developed in its treatment of parallel themes (e.g. the discussion of husband-wives, parents-children, and developed ideas of the church as the body). The exception is the slave-master discussion, but this is because of the Philemon controversy in Colosse. However, no definite conclusion can be made as to which

letter preceded the other. Colossians also is closely connected to Philemon. Many of the figures mentioned in Colossians are mentioned in Philemon. Compare Philemon 23 with Col. 1:7, 4:12-19. This close connection to Philemon is one of the strongest arguments for the letter's authenticity. In contrast, many of the names tied to Philippians are different suggesting some distance between those letters.

Conclusion: The evidence supports the view that the letter is authentic, and that Paul wrote this letter during his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31).

## **II. Place of Writing**

Rome is the traditional location. Caesarea and Ephesus also are suggested as possible origins of the letter. The evidence for an Ephesian imprisonment does not really exist and the size of Caesarea makes it unlikely as a missionary center while Paul is in prison, or the center of activity such as Paul's companions undertook while he was imprisoned (Col. 4:3-4). Against Rome is the supposed problem of the 1,200 miles Onesimus must travel to get back to (and escape from) Philemon. The visit to Colosse (Philemon 22) is said to contradict plans to go to Rome (Rom. 15:28). But change in travel plans do occur with Paul (note: 1 Cor. 16:7-9 with 2 Cor. 1:15, 24). The Rome hypothesis is still the best view in light of all the factors that must be considered.

## **III. Date of Writing**

This may be the first of the Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians (See above on the relation of this letter to Ephesians and Philemon). It would have been written early or in the middle of Paul's Roman imprisonment in A.D. 60-61.

## **IV. The City of Colosse**

Colosse was a comparatively unimportant city; in fact, it was the least significant of the cities to which Paul addressed any of his letters. It was located near two other cities, Laodicea and Hierapolis. All three cities were on the Lycus River in Phrygia, which is in modern South Central

Turkey. On a highway leading east to the Euphrates area, the cities were approximately 100 miles east of Ephesus. Colosse was once an important city, but by the first century it was a market town smaller than both Laodicea and Hierapolis. Wealthy Jewish merchants living in the area would have some impact on the thinking of religious people in the area.

## **V. The Church at Colosse**

The church was not founded by Paul. He writes after hearing of their faith in Christ (1:4, 9). In 2:1 he says they have not seen his face. Evidently the church was founded during Paul's stay at Ephesus (Acts 19:10). It is likely that Epaphras was the founder of the church (cf. 1:7; 4:12-13). It seems that the church was primarily Gentile. Several passages give this impression. In 1:21 Paul refers to them as "formerly alienated and hostile in mind" (cf. Eph. 2:11-19). In 1:27 he speaks of ministering the mystery to Gentiles, evidently an allusion to the Colossians themselves. The sins that are listed in 3:5-7 fit particularly those of pagan Gentiles. There are no OT quotations in this letter.

## **VI. The Heresy at Colosse**

It seems Epaphras had brought a report of the heresy that was threatening the health of the church (cf. 1:7; 4:12-13).

The false doctrine seemed to have two convergent streams: Judaism and incipient Gnosticism. There are a number of allusions to the first of these. There are the references to circumcision in 2:11 and 3:11 (cf. 4:11). Paul also discusses dietary regulations and Jewish holidays in 2:16 (a shadow of coming things). The reference to angel worship also indicates a possible Jewish emphasis (2:18). However, the more prominent false doctrine was incipient Gnosticism. The whole book breathes this heresy.

Gnosticism had two basic premises—(1) matter is intrinsically and essentially inferior or evil, and (2) salvation comes through mystic knowledge. Good is found only in the spirit world. This basic premise led to all sorts of teachings. (1) If matter is evil, the supreme and good God could not have created it. How then did matter come into being? This was explained by saying that God put out a series of emanations. The more distant these were from God, the less they were connected to

(or knew about) Him until finally a distant evil emanation created matter and the world. This is the god of the OT. (2) If matter is evil, then “the Christ” did not have a physical body. He was only a phantom, or the Christ spirit may have come upon the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him at the cross. Of course, this means Jesus Christ ultimately could not save mankind because He did not become flesh and blood. (3) This doctrine also has implications in the realm of morality and ethics. It took its course in two opposite extremes. One side said because matter is evil and our bodies are made of matter, we must be ascetics. The only way to deal with our bodies is to starve, beat and deny them. The opposite view was held by libertines who say the body is evil no matter what we do. Therefore, it does not matter how much we sin. Of course, this led to all sorts of sensual practices.

There also was great stress on mystic knowledge. There was much speculation and philosophizing about such things as emanations and secret knowledge. Salvation became a matter of knowledge and not faith.

Strangely, the rituals of Judaism and the esoteric knowledge of incipient Gnosticism joined forces to produce this bizarre heresy that Paul combats in this epistle. Providentially, this crucially important letter was written to a group of believers in an insignificant town, but it was necessary to check this false doctrine that has much in common with modern New Age teachings.

## **VII. The Occasion of the Epistle**

Evidently while Paul was in prison in Rome, Epaphras brought him news concerning the church at Colosse (4:12-13).

## **VIII. The Bearer of the Letter**

Tychicus carried this letter (Col. 4:7-9) along with Onesimus, and Paul’s private letter to Philemon (Col. 4:9).

# **“The Lordship of Jesus Christ”**

## **Colossians 1:13-20**

- |      |   |                |
|------|---|----------------|
| I.   | <b><u>Jesus is Lord of the Cross (Savior)</u></b><br><b>(This denies universalism/deism/fatalism)</b>       | <b>1:13-14</b> |
|      | 1. God has delivered us from the power of Satan.  | 1:13           |
|      | 2. God has transferred us into the principality of His sovereignty.   | 1:13           |
|      | 3. God has redeemed us through the payment of His Son.  | 1:14           |
| II.  | <b><u>Jesus is Lord of Communication (Revealer)</u></b><br><b>(This denies cultism/atheism/agnosticism)</b> | <b>1:15</b>    |
|      | 1. He is the representation of God (His reflection).  |                |
|      | 2. He is the manifestation of God (His revelation).   |                |
| III. | <b><u>Jesus is Lord of Creation (Creator)</u></b><br><b>(This denies evolution/naturalism)</b>              | <b>1:15-17</b> |
|      | 1. He is Lord because of His sovereignty.   | 1:15           |
|      | 2. He is Lord because of His agency.  | 1:16           |
|      | 3. He is Lord because of His priority.  | 1:17           |
|      | 4. He is Lord because of His consistency.   | 1:17           |
| IV.  | <b><u>Jesus is Lord of the Church (Leader)</u></b><br><b>(This denies individualism)</b>                    | <b>1:18-20</b> |
|      | 1. He is first.   | 1:18           |
|      | a. In position  |                |
|      | b. By resurrection  |                |
|      | 2. He has fullness.   | 1:19           |
|      | 3. He provides forgiveness.   | 1:20           |

\*Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound\*

Colossians 1:1-8

I. We Need To Hear About God's Gifts 1:1-2

1. We have the perspective of a servant. 1:1
2. We have the position of a saint. 1:2
  - a. Holy means we are separated.
  - b. Faithful means we are steadfast.
  - c. In Christ mean we are secure.
3. We have the privilege of sonship. 1:2

II. We Need To Hear About God's Graces 1:3-5

1. There is the grace of faith in the Savior. 1:3-4
2. There is the grace of love for the saints. 1:4
3. There is the grace of hope of our salvation. 1:5

III. We Need To Hear about God's Gospel 1:5-8

1. The gospel truth is to reach the world. 1:5-6
2. The gospel truth should reproduce fruit. 1:6
3. The gospel truth is rooted in grace. 1:6
4. The gospel truth is reported by us. 1:7-8
  - a. We are to be faithful teachers. 1:7
  - b. We are to be faithful ministers. 1:7
  - c. We are to be faithful lovers. 1:8

\*How To Pray For Others\*

Colossians 1:9-12

We Should Pray That Others Will:

I. Know The Will of God 1:9

1. We need to know God's plan (God's Will)
2. We need to know His principles (God's Wisdom)
3. We need to know His perspective (God's Ways)

II. Keep Their Walk With God 1:10-12

1. We maintain our walk by being concerned for the pleasure of God 1:10
2. We maintain our walk by being certain of the purpose of God 1:10
3. We maintain our walk by being controlled by the power of God 1:12
4. We maintain our walk by being consumed with the praise of God 1:12

**Productive Christians**

**FAITH** "in Christ" (Colossians 1:4)

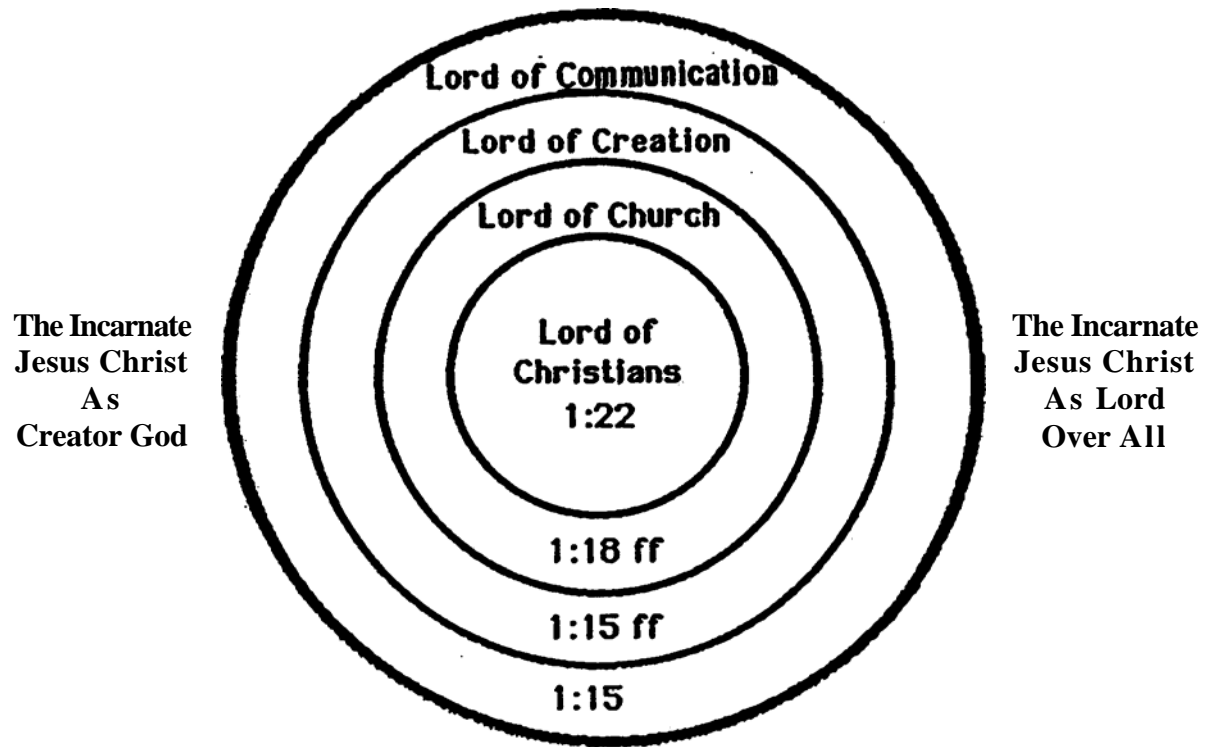
**LOVE** "to all the saints" (Colossians 1:4)

**HOPE** "which is laid up for you in heaven" (Colossians 1:5)

**FRUIT** "bringeth forth fruit" (Colossians 1:6)



**Christology in Colossians 1:15-23  
(His Preeminence over All Things)**



**“Free At Last! Free At Last!”**

Colossians 1: 21-23

- I. We Have Been Delivered From The Penalty of Sin 1:21  
(This is regeneration/conversion)
1. In the past we were alienated from God (a foe).
  2. In the present we are reconciled to God (Friend/Father).
- II. We Will Be Delivered from The Presence of Sin 1:22  
(This will be glorification)
1. We will be pure (holy).
  2. We will be perfect (blameless).
  2. We will be pardoned (above reproach).
- III. We Can Be Delivered from The Power of Sin 1:23  
(This is sanctification)
1. We must be consistent to our walk.
  2. We must be convicted in our will.
  3. We must be confident in the Word.

**My Heart, Christ's Home**

or

**Christ In You, The Hope of Glory**

Colossians 1:24-29

When Christ reigns as Lord in our life:

- I. We Will Suffer For Him 1:24
- 1) We suffer with joy
  - 2) We suffer for His body
- II. We Will Serve Under Him 1:25-27
- 1) We have a trust from God 1:25
  - 2) We have a truth of grace 1:26
  - 3) We have a treasure that is glorious 1:27
- III. We Will Share About Him 1:28
- 1) We preach Him to others
  - 2) We present others to Him
- IV. We Will Strive Through Him 1:29
- 1) We strive for His purpose
  - 2) We strive with His power

## **How To Deal With Spiritual Deceivers**

Colossians. 2:1-5

- I. The Church Must Be Encouraged 2:1-2
  - 1) We express concern to those we love 2:1
  - 2) We extend comfort to those we love 2:2
- II. Christ Must Be Expounded 2:2-3
  - 1) We tell of His wealth 2:2
  - 2) We tell of His wisdom 2:3
- III. Christians Must Be Educated
  - 1) We must be warned concerning potential deception 2:4
  - 2) We must be wise concerning spiritual diligence 2:5

## **Exposing The Spiritual Kidnappers**

Colossians 2:6-10

- I. We Must Affirm Christ And His Conduct 2: 6-7
  - 1) We are to follow after Him 2:6
  - 2) We are to be founded In Him 2:7
  - 3) We are to be faithful to Him 2:7
  - 4) We are to be filled with Him 2:7
- II. We Must Accept Christ And His Creed 2:8
  - 1) You can be captive to the wrong philosophy
  - 2) You can be controlled by the wrong people
  - 3) You can be confused by the wrong principles
- III. We Must Acknowledge Christ And His Completeness 2:9-10
  - 1) Christ Is God in His person 2:9
  - 2) Christ is glorious to His people 2:10
    - A. He is our perfecter
    - B. He is our protector

## **Victory In Jesus**

Colossians 2:11-15

- I. In Him We Experience Spiritual Transformation 2:11
  - 1) We have a new position of forgiveness
  - 2) We have a new condition of freedom
- II. In Him We Experience Personal Union 2:12
  - 1) We have died with Him
  - 2) We are alive in Him
- III. In Him We experience Supernatural Resurrection 2:13
  - 1) In the past we were condemned in sin
  - 2) In the present we are cleansed of sin
- IV. In Him We Experience Legal Satisfaction 2:14
  - 1) He has put away our debt to the law
  - 2) He has paid our debt at the cross
- V. In Him We Experience Total Liberation 2:15
  - 1) He has expelled the forces of evil
  - 2) He has exposed the forces of evil
  - 3) He has embarrassed the forces of evil

## **FALSE RELIGION VS. FULFILLING RELATIONSHIP**

Colossians 2:16-23

- I. False Religion Promotes Unspiritual Legalism 2:16-17
  - 1) Legalism is always interested in the superficial 2:16
  - 2) Legalism always ignores the essential 2:17
- II. False Religion Pursues Unprofitable Mysticism 2:18-20
  - 1) Mysticism encourages spiritual elitism 2:18
  - 2) Mysticism will experience spiritual emaciation 2:19
- III. False Religion Preaches Unnecessary Asceticism 2:20-23
  - 1) Asceticism is a form of slavery 2:20
  - 2) Asceticism is a pursuit of futility 2:21-22
  - 3) Asceticism is flawed by inability 2:23

## **BIBLICAL SUICIDE**

Colossians 3:1-11

If we are to die to self:

- I. We Must Pursue The Things of Christ In Our Attitudes 3:1-4
  - 1) Our position in Christ provides motivation 3:1-2
    - a. Being in Christ affects our hearts 3:1
    - b. Being in Christ affects our minds 3:2
  - 2) Our position in Christ provides protection 3:3
  - 3) Our position in Christ provides expectation 3:4
- II. We Must Perform The Things of Christ In Our Actions 3:5-11
  - 1) Toward ourselves we must put to death sinful desires 3:5-7
    - a. Sinful desires may express themselves sexually 3:5
    - b. Sinful desires may express themselves selfishly 3:5
    - c. Sinful desires may express themselves short-sightedly 3:5
    - d. Sinful desires may express themselves shamefully 3:5
  - 2) Toward others we must put to death sinful deeds 3:8-11
    - a. Sinful desires may express themselves emotionally 3:8
    - b. Sinful desires may express themselves verbally 3:8-9
    - c. Sinful desires may express themselves inconsistently 3:9-10
    - d. Sinful desires may express themselves racially 3:11
    - e. Sinful desires may express themselves socially 3:11

## **THE WELL DRESSED CHRISTIAN**

Colossians 3:12-17

- I. He Will Clothe Himself With Love 3:12-14
  - 1) There are reasons for our clothing 3:12
    - a) We have been selected by God
    - b) We have been set apart by God
    - c) We have become special to God
  - 2) There are resource for our clothing 3:12
  - 3) There are results from our clothing 3:13-14
    - a) We will be longsuffering 3:13
    - b) We will be forgiving 3:13
    - c) We will be loving 3:14
- II. He Will Clothe Himself With Peace 3:15
  - 1) We are to be controlled by peace
  - 2) We have been called to peace
- III. He Will Clothe Himself With Thankfulness 3:15
- IV. He Will Clothe Himself With The Word of God 3:16-17
  - 1) It will encourage instruction 3:16
  - 2) It will encourage admonition 3:16
  - 3) It will encourage celebration 3:16
  - 4) It will encourage consecration 3:17
  - 5) It will encourage appreciation 3:17

### **WHEN CHRIST IS LORD OF THE HOME**

Colossians 3:18-21

- I. Wives Will Yield To Their Husbands            3:18
  - 1) Wives will give their submission to their husbands.
  - 2) Wives will give their adoration to the Lord.
- II. Husbands Will Love Their Wives            3:19
  - 1) Husbands will provide the best for their wives.
  - 2) Husbands will avoid bitterness towards their wives.
- III. Children Will Honor Their Parents            3:20
  - 1) Obedient children will bless their earthly parents.
  - 2) Obedient children will please their heavenly Father.
- IV. Parents Will Encourage Their children            3:21
  - 1) Parents should not unfairly demean their children.
  - 2) Parents should not unwisely discourage their children.

### **TAKING JESUS TO THE WORKPLACE**

Colossians 3:22-4:1

- I. Employees Will Be Faithful To Their Employer            3:22-25
  - 1) We serve with the character of our Lord.            3:22
  - 2) We serve with commitment to our Lord.            3:23
  - 3) We serve with confidence In the Lord.            3:24
  - 4) We serve with caution towards our Lord.            3:25
- II. Employers Will Be Fair To Their Employees            4:11
  - 1) There should be integrity in what we do.
  - 2) There should be accountability In what we do.

## **ESSENTIALS FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM**

Colossians 4:2-6

- I. We Must Have A Committed Prayer Life 4:2-4
  - 1) We must pray with intensity. 4:2
  - 2) We must pray in intercession. 4:3
  - 3) We must pray with intent. 4:3-4
- II. We Must Have A Consistent Public Life 4:5-6
  - 1) We must walk in wisdom. 4:5
  - 2) We must talk with wisdom. 4:6
    - a. Controlled by grace.
    - b. Careful in response.
    - c. Concerned for others.

## **FRIENDS WORTH DYING FOR**


Colossians 4:7-18

Friends worth dying for are:

- I. Faithful 4:7-9
  - 1) They are trusted servants. 4:7
  - 2) They are trusted confidants. 4: 8-9
- II. Fellow-laborers 4:10
  - 1) They provide companionship. 4:10
  - 2) They provide comfort. 4:11
- III. Fervent 4: 12-13
  - 1) They are fervent in their calling. 4:12
  - 2) They are fervent in their concern. 4:13
- IV. Family 4:14-15
  - 1) They are special. 4:14
  - 2) They are hospitable. 4:15
- V. Finishers 4:16-17
  - 1) They share encouragement with others.
  - 2) They need encouragement from others.
- VI. Fighters 4:18
  - 1) They remember us in the battle.
  - 2) We remember them in the battle

# PHILEMON

*“From Bondage to Brotherhood”  
Forgiveness and Restitution*

Focus	Prayer of Thanksgiving	Petition for Onesimus	Promise to Philemon
Divisions	Commendation of Philemon’s Love	Intercession for Onesimus	Confidence in Philemon’s Obedience
Topics	Character of Philemon	Conversion of Onesimus	Confidence of Paul
			
Key Phrase	You...have refreshed the hearts of the saints	Refresh my heart in Christ	
	I hear about your faith...and love	I appeal to you on the basis of love	Charge it to me
Place	Rome (Prison)		
Time	A.D. 60-61		

The book of Philemon is about a slave (Onesimus) who ran away from his master (Philemon). Onesimus ran to Rome where he came in contact with Paul and he was saved. Paul now sends Onesimus back to Philemon with a letter which asks the master to forgive his former slave who is now a brother in Christ.



## **INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON**

This brief 25-verse letter is unique in the corpus of Pauline writings. Though addressed to Philemon of Colossae, it is not, strictly speaking, a private letter as its' content reveals. Yet it is occasioned by a personal problem that the Apostle hopes to resolve. The letter provides an interesting glimpse into the Apostle Paul's strategy in handling personal issues as they impact the lives of his converts. Philemon is one of the five one-chapter books of the Bible, the other four being Obadiah, II and III John, and Jude.

### **I. Authorship**

Paul is the author of this letter (v. 1). Only the most radical and skeptical scholars have questioned its' genuineness. Such critics are usually motivated by the fact that the book strongly supports the authenticity of Colossians which they question or reject. The book, however, was unanimously affirmed by the early church. In spite of its' brevity, the authenticity (that it is Pauline) and canonicity (that it belonged in our N.T. as an inspired writing) of it was never seriously questioned. Style, vocabulary and other internal considerations are consistent with what we know of Paul.

### **II. Date and Location of Writing**

Philemon is a prison epistle and its' date and location of writing is tied to this issue. The traditional view is that the epistle was written from Rome between A.D. 60-63, and the imprisonment is that of his first Roman incarceration as recorded in Acts 28:30-31. Altogether Paul penned four epistles during his first Roman imprisonment Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Ephesians and Colossians are sometimes called twin epistles because of their similar content. Colossians and Philemon are often called sister epistles because of their common recipients and destination.

An alternate theory is that the epistle of Philemon was written either from Caesarea or Ephesus in the mid-50's. The Ephesian hypothesis has especially been attractive to some recent scholars because of its nearer proximity and therefore more convenient location to Colossae (about 100 miles). This theory also makes the return trip by Onesimus and Tychicus to Colossae easier, as well as Paul's intended forthcoming visit (v. 22). It is further argued that this scenario clears up two previously obscure appeals the apostle made in Colossians 4:16-17. Paul requested there that Colossians be read by the church at Laodicea, and of the church at Colossae he asked that "ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (v. 16). If this theory is correct, Philemon is the "lost" letter to the Laodiceans. Then Paul told the church at Colossae to remind Archippus to fulfill the service he received from the Lord (Col. 4:17), i.e., the freeing of Onesimus. Through both appeals Paul invited the church to intercede with the slavemaster to release Onesimus and return him to Paul's service.

Though an attractive alternative, this latter theory is not sufficiently strong to overturn the virtually unanimous testimony of the early church. In addition, though the Roman hypothesis makes correspondence and travel more difficult, it does not make it impossible. It is also questionable whether the Ephesian imprisonment allowed enough time for any correspondence. When all things are considered, a date of A.D. 60-63 from Rome is the most likely.

### **III. Occasion of the Epistle**

This letter is a semi-private and personal appeal by Paul to Philemon asking him to unconditionally forgive and receive back his slave Ones without penalty (v. 17). Before he was a slave, but now he is a beloved brother (v. 16). Paul will personally be responsible for any debts Onesimus has incurred (v. 18). We do not know why Onesimus ran away or if he took anything from his master. All we know about is the conversion of Onesimus and Paul's appeal. Since a slave was subject to severe discipline for running away, even death, Paul's appeal is a kind and gracious act on behalf of Onesimus.

It is also an insightful guide as to how believers might go about the task of mediating conflicts within the family of God. As an instruction manual in resolving personal difficulties between Christians, this short epistle is of great value. Tychicus probably accompanied Onesimus back to Philemon as he returned from Paul with the letter of Colossians (cf. Col. 4:7-9).

#### **IV. Key Personalities in the Epistle**

Philemon means “affectionate.” He was a citizen of Colossae. This point seems to emerge from the fact that Onesimus (Col. 4:9) and Archippus (Col. 4:17) are from Colossae. He was wealthy enough to have slaves and was converted to Christianity by Paul (v. 19). The church in Colossae met in his home (v. 2).

Onesimus means “useful” or “profitable.” There is a play on his name in verse 11. He was Philemon’s slave, who had run away only to come into contact with Paul and become a Christian (vv. 11, 16). He became close to Paul and was regarded as a valuable assistant by him (vv. 13-15).

Apphia means “endearment.” Chrysostom and Theodoret believed she was Philemon’s wife. According to tradition, she died as a martyr.

Archippus means “master of the horse” or perhaps “chief groom.” Many think he was perhaps the son of Philemon and Apphia. He may have even been the pastor of the church meeting in their home (note his description in v. 2 as a “fellow soldier,” also cf. Col 4:17).

Others mentioned in the epistle are Timothy (v. 1), Epaphras (v. 23), Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke (v. 24, cf. also 2 Tim 4:9-11). There are a total of 11 names that appear in this short letter.

#### **V. Social Impact**

Dealing with a problem arising out of the institution of slavery, this epistle has figured prominently in debate surrounding that issue. It has been confidently appealed to both by those who sanctioned slavery as well as those who advocated its abolition. While it is true that the words of the Apostle here cannot be construed to advocate the abolition of slavery, yet the spirit of the epistle has definitely supported that position. The manner in which Paul treats the problem of Onesimus indicates the way in which Christianity confronted the evils of human society. To have directly denounced the institution of human slavery would have precipitated an immediate conflict between Rome and Christianity. It would have marked Christianity as being anti-social, and would have tamed all the powers of the Empire against it. Instead of making a frontal attack upon the institution of slavery, Christianity inculcated a spirit of love, grace, compassion, and consideration which ultimately meant the death knell of that institution. That anyone claiming the name of Jesus Christ could advocate slavery is simply another indictment of our depravity and wickedness.

#### **VI. Structure and Key Verse**

Philemon is a marvelous example of the use of mitigated exhortation. Indeed, as a type of hortatory (exhortation) discourse, it contains the three salient components of 1) problem, 2) command, and 3) motivation. However, Paul mitigates the command to the final position of the text. This is borne out by the fact that there is not a single imperative in vv. 1-16, but in verse 17 there are three imperatives which rapidly follow one another (a fourth is in v. 22). Verse 17, therefore, is the key to the book where Paul says to Philemon, “Receive him (Onesimus) as you would receive me.” Paul employs psychological tact while at the same time not sacrificing his apostle’s authority.

#### **VII. Points of Interest Concerning Philemon**

- 1) Paul’s shortest epistle (25 verses)
- 2) Only 335 words in the Greek text
- 3) Most private of all of Paul’s epistles

- 4) Presents a beautiful picture of the gospel by way of analogy
  - a) All of us were once like Onesimus, runaways (sinners) from our rightful owner (God).
  - b) Someone on our behalf has pleaded our case, even to the paying of our debt (Jesus Christ) 1 Tim. 2:5
    - \* Substitution v. 17
    - \* Imputation v. 18
  - c) Through our advocate we can be restored, even to the adoption of sons!

What is accountability? Charles Swindoll defines it this way: “a willingness to explain one's actions, the ability to answer for one's life and to supply the reasons why.” That seems to be a hard thing to do for American Christians. Very few people are actually accountable to another person. But the fact that it is not often practiced does not excuse us. Sure it's threatening - but it's good for us. Accountability encourages growth And it's biblical.

We know very well that the Bible tells us that we are accountable to God but the Bible also tells us that we should be accountable to one another as well - at least if we are wise. Let's just look at some passages which speak to this issue.

Proverbs 13:10: “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.”

Proverbs 13:18: “He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.”

Proverbs 15:31: “He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.”

Proverbs 27:9: “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.”

Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

Romans 15:14: “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one Another.”

All these passages tell us that we should be accountable to one another. Accountability is good for us. By being accountable we are less likely to stumble into a trap. By being accountable we don't get away with unwise and sinful action. It's good for us.

## **PHILEMON**

### **Paul's Greeting to Philemon      vv. 1-3**

### **Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer      vv. 4-7**

Paul is always thankful      v. 4a

When is Paul thankful      v. 4b

When he mentions them in prayer.

Reason for thanksgiving v. 5

Because he heard of their

1) faith in Christ

2) love for the saints

Content of the prayer      v. 6

For an effective sharing from faith in the context of a full knowledge of God's will for us in Christ

Reason for Paul's joy and comfort      v. 7

Because of Philemon's love that refreshed the saints

### **Paul's Approach to the Request      vv. 8-12**

A possible basis of the request      v. 8

Paul could request the proper response on the ground of his authority (i.e., as an apostle)

The proper basis of Paul's request      v. 9a

For love's sake he appeals, he does not command

The humble condition of the one who requests      v. 9b

An aged man who is now a prisoner

The subject of the request      vv. 10-12

Onesimus

1) Paul's son

2) converted while Paul was in chains

3) formerly useless but now useful to Paul and Philemon

4) the one sent to Philemon is to be received as if he were Paul

### **The Context of the Request      vv. 13-14**

Paul's original desire      v. 13

To keep Onesimus as Philemon's minister to him

Why Paul refused his desire      v. 14a

He did not wish to act without Philemon's consent.

The reason Paul wanted Philemon's input      v. 14b

So that Philemon would act voluntarily

**Paul's View of the Situation      vv. 15-16**

Paul's explanation of the separation and why he cannot keep Onesimus

v. 15

That Philemon might receive back Onesimus for eternity

Paul's view of Onesimus that Philemon should share

v. 16

Regard him as a brother, not as a slave. As he has been to Paul, may he be so much more to Philemon.

**Paul's Request      vv. 17-20**

Paul's request

v. 17

Receive Onesimus as you would me.

Paul's offer

vv. 18-19a

Any obligation should be credited to Paul. He will pay it back.

Reminder about the offer of Paul

v. 19b

Paul could remind Philemon he owes Paul his life (spiritual).

Paul's request for himself

v. 20

Give Paul this benefit and refresh his affection in Christ.

**Paul's Confidence    vv. 21-22**

Paul's knowledge

v. 21

Paul writes knowing Philemon will do what Paul requests.

Paul's hope

v. 22

Philemon is to prepare a guest room, for Paul hope to visit him because of answered prayer.

**Paul's Final Greetings and Benediction**

**vv. 21-22**

**PHILEMON**  
**A CALL TO FORGIVENESS AND FELLOWSHIP**

- I. Paul's Greeting to Philemon and the Christian Community - vv. 1-3
  - 1) Paul addresses Philemon as an equal in anticipation of his appeal. v.1
  - 2) Others are greeted and affirmed within the community, promoting a joint awareness about the problem which will be addressed in the letter (accountability). v.2
  - 3) A Christian greeting is extended which recognizes the need for God to be with them in what they are about to consider. v. 3
- II. Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer for Philemon's Love and Faith - vv. 4-7
  - 1) Love and faith are the energizers of the spiritual life as the vertical relationship translates into horizontal relationships. vv. 4-5
  - 2) The basis of faith's action is Christ Jesus. v. 6
  - 3) Praise for the care of others and the good appeal to past action will be an encouragement to many. v. 7
  - 4) We should not assume that past action guarantees a present proper response. (implied) w. 7-8
- III. Paul's Plea for Onesimus - vv. 8-20
  - 1) The appeal is made on the basis of a filial relationship, not an authoritative one (non-use of a personal right). v. 9
  - 2) Love has the capacity to change the dynamic in relationships. v. 9
  - 3) Love exhibits tasteful gentleness in defending a brother in the wrong. vv. 10-11
  - 4) Faith has the ability to see benefits in the midst of difficulties. vv. 10-11
  - 5) God's wondrous transformation of a slave into a brother and a bad situation into a good one demonstrates God's ability to triumph over a disaster. vv. 12-13
  - 6) Paul is courteous as he addresses Philemon. v.14
  - 7) The value of "free will" motivation rather than forced authority is apparent. v.15
  - 8) God transforms not only a person's position, but his relationships with others. v. 16
  - 9) Paul provides a marvelous example (substitution) of an appeal to reconciliation among Christians. v. 17

10) Paul as the third party proposes to deal with any debt to help created a climate for reconciliation (The mediator goes beyond what is required). vs. 18-19

11) Paul looks forward to the encouragement that comes from the kind treatment of one's brother (How we treat one another does matter not only to God, but also to others). vs. 20

### III. Paul's Declaration of His Confidence and His Desire to Visit Soon - vs. 21-22

1) Paul is an encourager. vs. 21

2) Paul is hopeful of personal fellowship: People are brothers, not tools for ministry. vs. 22

### V. Paul's Final Greetings - vs. 23-24

1) Paul conveys the good wishes of others. vs. 23-24

2) Paul commends them all to the grace of God found in Christ Jesus. vs. 25

## EXEGETICAL INSIGHTS IN PHILEMON

### I. KEY WORDS AND THEIR OCCURRENCE.

- A) *Lord* (6 times: vs.3,5,16,20,20,25)
- B) *Jesus* (5 times: vs.1,3,5,6,25)
- C) *Christ* (7 times: vs.1,3,6,8,9,23,25)
- D) *Love* (agape in some form; 5 times: vs.1,5,7,9,16)
- E) *Heart* (bowels, innermost being; 3 times: vs.7,12,20)
- F) *Prisoner* (sometimes translated “chains;” 5 times: vs.1,9,10,13; also “fellow prisoner” in vs.23, but there it is a different Greek word.)

\*In Greek there are three (possibly four) key words for love:

- 1) *Eros* - from which we derive our word erotic. It speaks of sensual, physical, desire for something.
- 2) *Phileo* - which speaks of brotherly (or friendship) love one for another.
- 3) *Agape* - a word uniquely developed in the N.T. It speaks of a sacrificial giving for the ultimate good of another. This love is not emotional or sensual, it is volitional.
- 4) *Storge* - familial or family love.

It has been said by one that:

Eros is the take kind of love.

Phileo is the give and take kind of love.

Agape is the give kind of love.

### II. A KEY IDEA.

The house church - There is no evidence for church buildings of any magnitude until the third century. Interestingly, without elaborate buildings, budgets, programs, and in some cases gross opulence, the early church took the gospel message literally across the world with tremendous success via the hand of God. There are numerous references in the N.T. to house churches and their hosts:

Gaius at Rome (Rom. 16:23)

Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus (1Cor. 16:19)

Aquila and Priscilla at Rome (Rom. 16:3,5)

Lydia at Philippi (Acts 16:15,40)

Nymnpha at Laodicea (Col.4:15)

Philemon at Colossae (Philemon 2)

Mary at Jerusalem (Acts 12:12)

Jason at Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-6)



## **THE PARAMETERS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN**

### *Philemon 1-3*

- I. A believer is a prisoner of the Lord Jesus. (vs.1)
  - A) His condition is one of divine confinement (a prisoner).
  - B) His companions should be those of “delightful encouragement (a brother).”
  
- II. A believer has partners through the Lord Jesus. (vs.1-2)
  - A) Philemon: the embodiment of a fellow worker. (vs.1)
  - B) Apphia: the embodiment of a faithful sister. (vs.2)
  - C) Acchippus: the embodiment of a fellow soldier. (vs.2)
  - D) The church: the embodiment of a faithful equipper. (vs.2)
  
- III. A believer experiences privileges in the Lord Jesus. (vs.3)
  - A) He is blessed by the Father. (cf. Eph. 1:3-6)
  - B) He is blessed by the Son. (cf. Rom. 5:1; 8:1, Eph. 1:7-12)

## “GOD'S SUPERLATIVE SERVANT”

(Philemon 4-7)

### I. He gives cause for thanksgiving to God      vv. 4-5

- 1) He has faith in God's Son
- 2) He has love for God's saints

(v. 5 is a chiasmus      Love      Faith      cf. Col. 1:4)  
                                  Christ      Saints

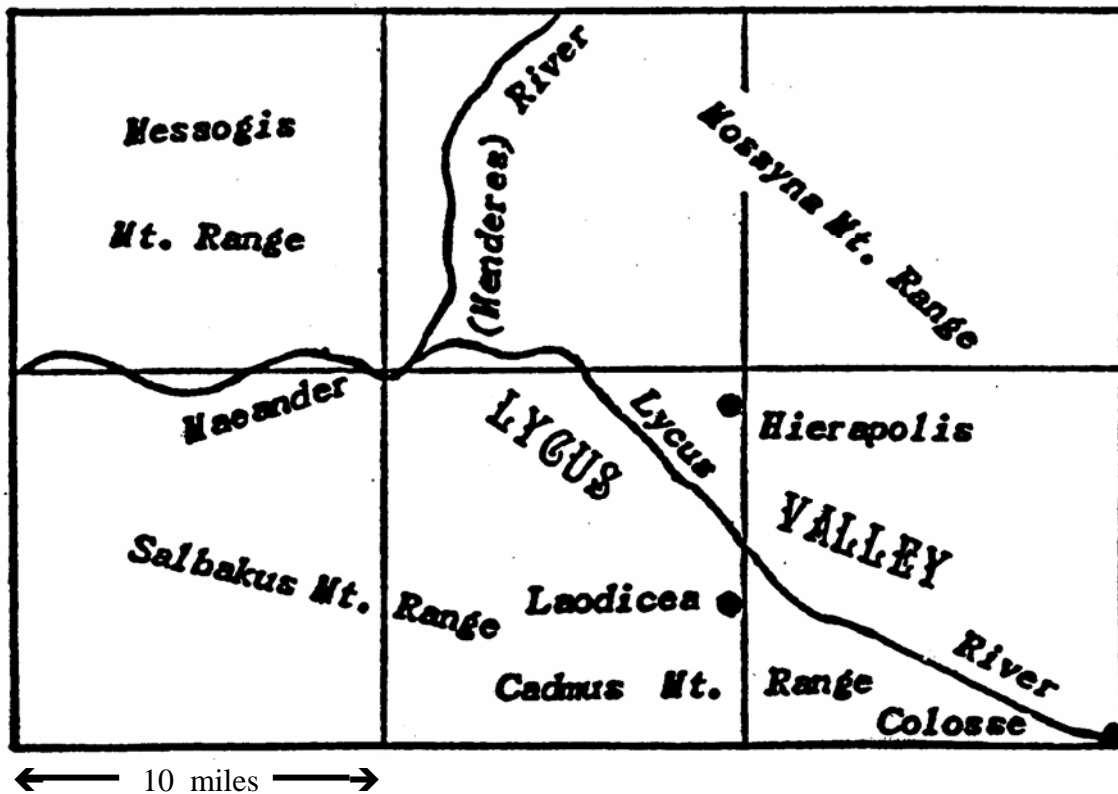
### II. He grows in understanding of God      v. 6

- 1) He is active in sharing his faith with the saints.
- 2) He is active in knowing his blessings from the Son.

### III. He generates the blessings of God.      v. 7

- 1) He is a source of joy.
- 2) He is a source of encouragement.
- 3) He is a source of refreshment.

### Sketch of the Lycus Valley



**“HOW TO ASK A FAVOR”  
(Philemon 8-16)**

- I. **Remember the principle of humility** vv. 8-9
  - 1) Do not take advantage of a higher position v. 8
  - 2) Do make the appeal from a proper motivation v. 9
- II. **Remember the principle of sensitivity.** vv. 10-11
  - 1) Be hopeful v. 10
  - 2) Be honest v. 11
- III. **Remember the principle of integrity** vv. 12-13
  - 1) Let others see your sincerity (show yourself faithful) v. 12
  - 2) Let others know where you stand (share all the facts) v. 13
- IV. **Remember the principle of accountability** v. 14
  - 1) Know who is responsible
  - 2) Know what is right
- V. **Remember the principle of sovereignty** vv. 15-16
  - 1) God’s goals are eternal not temporal v. 15
  - 2) God’s goals are spiritual not carnal v. 16

**“THE GRACE OF GENTLE ARM-TWISTING”**  
**A Marvelous Model of Tact**  
**(Philemon 17-25)**

### **I. Choose the right words**

vv. 17-20

- 1) Receive - Love him as you love me (substitution) v. 17
- 2) Reckon - If a wrong needs to be corrected lay it to my account (satisfaction) vv. 18-19
- 3) Refresh - Do what you should for Christ's sake (reconciliation) v. 20  
(note the 3 imperatives in vv. 17, 18, 20 and the way in which Paul softens their sting)

## **II. Communicate with reaffirming wisdom,    vv. 21-22**

- 1) Express your confidence as to their action v. 21
  - 2) Express your confidence as to your reception v. 22
- (A fourth imperative is in v. 22. It also is conveyed in a gentle and gracious manner.)

### III. Covenant with respected witnesses vv. 22-23

- 1) There should be earthly confirmation vv. 23-24
- 2) There should be heavenly confirmation v. 25

\* Remember: “Friends are no good unless you can use them.” Jim Parker

\* Also remember: “When you use a friend use him good.”

### **Ten Characteristics of Paul's Masterpiece of Tactful Pleading**

- 1) Listen to me, that is, to Paul, a man who has grown old in the service of his Lord ( v. 9).
- 2) I am now a prisoner of Christ Jesus (vv. 1, 9). Surely, compared to the hardships of my imprisonment how small is the favor I am asking of you.
- 3) Besides, I am your friend, who loves you, and admires you for the manner in which you have again and again refreshed the hearts of the saints (vv. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 20).
- 4) We are in debt to God for all his goodness shown to us (v. 6). Also, you: are in debt to me. In fact, you owe me your very life (v. 19).
- 5) Onesimus is my child, my very heart, a brother beloved (vv. 10, 12, 16).
- 6) It is to your advantage to grant my request that you accept Onesimus, for the once useless one has become useful. I, for one, surely so regard him (vv. 11, 13, 14).
- 7) Favorable action on your part would be in line with God's providential direction, which we should gratefully acknowledge (vv. 15, 22b).
- 8) The fellowship of all believers in Christ demands this, for not only you and I are included in this but so is Onesimus (v. 17).
- 9) I have confidence in your obedience (v. 21).
- 10) I want you to prepare a guest room for me, for I hope, in answer to the prayers of God's children, to be granted to you (v. 22b). Surely, you would not wish to disappoint me.

William Hendriksen

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The book of Philemon is one which emphasizes the dual track of accountability and sensitivity. It is indeed a “model of tact.”

Proverbs tell us that the wise man will make a good choice of the words he uses when he speaks. The right word at the right time to the right version is an effective and beautiful thing. Note the following verses:

Proverbs 10:32 “The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.”

Proverbs 12:18 “Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Proverbs 15:1 “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Proverbs 15:23 “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-and how good is a timely word!”

Proverbs 15:28 “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.”

Proverbs 16:24 “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”

Proverbs 25:11 “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

Proverbs 26:4-5 “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.”

Again, the right word at the right time to the right person is a wonderful thing, a beautiful thing, a sweet thing, a pleasant thing, even a joyful thing.

However, this doesn't mean that the facts are not considered. Tact is honest. It involves no sacrifice of honesty or candor. The tactful person does not shirk his duty even when he is convinced that he must admonish or rebuke. But he has learned the art of doing this without being rude. Paul told the truth about Onesimus and set forth an honest case. He admitted that the runaway slave had been useless. But Paul notes that there had been a radical change in the man. He was honest, but he was kind. He was tactful. He leaves us a marvelous pattern to follow. Therefore, may all remember the following:

A careless word may kindle strife;  
A cruel word may wreck a life;  
A bitter word may smite and kill;  
A brutal word will accomplish nil;  
A gracious word may smooth the way;  
A joyous word may light the way;  
A timely word may lessen stress;  
A loving word may heal and bless.